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Auditor reveals embezzlements in Sudan

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Embezzlement from the public treasury reached half a million dollars (767 million Sudanese pounds) in the second half of 1995, the Sudanese government's auditor general, Abubakir Abdullah Marin, has told parliament. In a report on government accounts for that period, given Monday, Marin attributed the squandering of public funds to "weak financial controls, non-abidance by the financial rules and regulations and lack of accountability." He revealed that out of the amount, only 61 million pounds (about $40,000) had been recovered.

Turkish government faces new censure motion

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish opposition said Tuesday that it would introduce a new censure motion next week in an effort to bring down the Islamist-led government of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. "We will submit our appeal for a vote of no-confidence for the government to the parliamentary speakership early next week," Mehmet Kececiler, deputy leader of the conservative Motherland Party, told reporters here. "The government will fall this time," Mr. Kececiler said. Mr. Erbakan's government narrowly escaped another opposition-launched censure motion last week, thanks to the support of a small extreme right-wing party.

British foreign office minister comes to Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — British Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett arrives in Amman today for talks with Jordanian officials, the British embassy announced. Mr. Fatchett is visiting Jordan as part of a regional tour.

Oman, Yemen sign maps fixing border

MUSCAT (AFP) — Oman and Yemen have signed maps demarcating their 310-kilometre border under a final settlement hammered out since 1992, officials from both sides said. "The accord between the two countries is the fruit of negotiations that were dominated by realist issues," said Sultan Ben Hamad Bussaidi, undersecretary at Oman's Agriculture Ministry, after a signing ceremony Monday. "The ratification of the maps fixing the definitive borders between Oman and Yemen is the culmination of four years of work," Mohammad Abdul Malek Alaki, chief of topography for Yemen in a joint negotiating team, told reporters. Muscat and Sanaa have had good relations since the unification of the former North and South Yemen in May 1990. Two years later, they signed an accord to demarcate the border. Oman has returned to Yemen around 5,000 square kilometres of border territory that was seized in the 1970s.

Rebel Kurds kill 5 in raid

DIYARBAKIR (AFP) — Separatist Kurdish rebels killed five civilians in a raid on a southeastern village in Turkey amid an ongoing Turkish military incursion into northern Iraq, a senior government official said Tuesday. Members of the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) raided Cardakli village near this southeastern centre late on Monday and sprayed the five people with bullets, Necati Bilican, governor of southeastern Turkey told reporters here. The victims included three pro-government Kurdish villagers and two workers operating a nearby water well, Mr. Bilican said, adding the rebels fled after the attack.

Hamas condemns arrest of Kuttab

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, criticised the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Tuesday for its detention of a television journalist, saying the authority was "gagging" freedom of expression. "We consider the detention of the journalist Daud Kuttab as a continuation of the authority's policy of gagging voices, hiding facts and deceiving the Palestinian people," Hamas said in a statement received by AFP. Mr. Kuttab has been held by police in the West Bank city of Ramallah for a week, presumably because of his live broadcasts of debates by the Palestinian Legislative Council which had criticised PNA officials. Mr. Kuttab's arrest "is among a series of arrests by the authority against Palestinian journalists for printing articles which do not align with the authority's viewpoint," Hamas charged.

King launches water flow from Israel; criticises resignation of union chiefs over new press law

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

ADASIYEH — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday said that a recent water agreement with Israel was the "fruit" of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, and stressed that peaceful dialogue was the only way to solve regional problems.

Speaking at a ceremony to celebrate the commencement of delivery of 30 million cubic metres of "fresh water" from Israel to Jordan in Adasiyeh, northwest of Amman, the King said that further projects between both sides are under consideration to solve Jordan's water problem.

"This is a fruit of peace. The peace that we wish to see includes the whole region, starting with our Palestinian brethren [to gain their rights] on their national soil, other Arab brothers, and the state of Israel... and dialogue is the way that leads to such results," the King said after pressing the button starting the flow of water from Lake Tiberias to the King Abdullah Canal.

Following the peace treaty, the King said Israel has supplied Jordan with 50 million cubic metres of water and the quest, now, was for an additional 50 million. He added that designs were made to start a joint water desalination project, and hinted that the location of the project has been decided.

"We have finalised the plan for this project and we will start implementing it," the King said referring to a JD250 million project that would supply Jordan with about 50 million cubic metres of water. Half of the cost will come from Israel while the remainder will be borne by foreign donors.

"We thank our neighbours [Israel] because they considered the needs of our citizens and gave us 30 million [cubic metres] of their fresh water to cover our needs," the King said to a gathering of Jordanian officials and foreign ambassadors.

The King said, in addition to the 50 million cubic metres that Jordan hopes to obtain, the Kingdom is looking for additional amounts of water, "not only for Jordan but for the Palestinians and Israelis as well."

"There are studies now on the possibility of transferring water that reaches the Dead Sea, with a relative degree of salt but not as salty as Dead Sea water to be utilised in Potash projects instead of the drinking water currently being used. This project will offer additional quantities of water to our citizens to meet their needs," the King added.

Turning to a domestic issue, King Hussein criticised the decision by some professional unions leaders to resign in protest against the government's new amendments to the Press and Publications law.

"God willing, the day will

(Continued on page 2)

Egypt-Israel summit results in little progress to revive peace

SHARM AL-SHEIKH (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak held a critical summit here Tuesday but were unable to break the deadlock in the peace process.

"For the resumption of talks between Israel and the Palestinians, we have not concluded things on this issue," Mr. Mubarak told a joint press conference after more than three hours of talks with Mr. Netanyahu.

"We have exchanged views (and) we need more consultations to reach the point where Israel and the Palestinians meet together," Mr. Mubarak said.

"This was a positive beginning but we need more work," said Mr. Netanyahu.

Both leaders refused to comment on the matter of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Arab east Jerusalem, the issue which has brought talks between Israel and the Palestinians to a dead halt for more than 10 weeks.

Mr. Netanyahu denied however that the summit at this Egyptian Red Sea resort, his first meeting with Mr. Mubarak since March, was a failure.

"I would in no circumstances characterize what went on here as a failure," Mr. Netanyahu said. "I would say it is a good beginning.

"I think this was the first step and a first step means there are more steps," he said. "We are at the beginning of a process which I think is an important process."

Mr. Mubarak said he expected a second meeting with Mr. Netanyahu "in the near future" but he could not "guarantee" that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat would join in a three-way summit.

"We will try very hard. This depends on so many elements. We hope to conclude this in the next meeting and then the three-way meeting could come," he said.

Mr. Netanyahu has repeatedly rejected Palestinian demands for a halt or a suspension in settlement building as a condition for resuming peace talks, a demand which Cairo backed.

Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians have been halted since Israel began construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem in mid-March.

Mr. Arafat and other Palestinian leaders warned ahead of the summit that it could be the last chance to rescue the peace process and avert a new eruption of violence.

In an interview Tuesday in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Mr. Arafat expressed fear of a possible outbreak of war if the peace process fails.

"There will be a catastrophe which would affect all of the Middle East, and I'm worried about war, if the peace process is not revived quickly," he said.

Palestinian International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath said Tuesday that if Mr. Netanyahu refuses to stop settlement building he would "destroy the peace process."

In a more dire warning, Mr. Arafat's top security chief Jabril Rajoub called

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Twelve suspected Palestinian land dealers to stand trial soon

RAMALLAH (AP) — As many as 12 Palestinians will stand trial soon on charges of selling land to Israelis, the Palestinian justice minister said Tuesday.

Freih Abu Medein defended his government's decision to use the death penalty against Palestinians convicted of making land sales to Israelis.

"It is a question of survival and sovereignty," he said at a news conference in Ramallah.

Mr. Abu Medein said between seven and 12 Palestinians would be tried publicly soon, but gave no other details. Attorney General Khaled Kidreh said 14 Palestinians have been arrested in recent weeks as part of a crackdown on land dealers.

The battle for land is at the heart of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and Palestinians see land sales to Israelis, allowing the expansion of Jewish settlements, as an unforgivable betrayal of their struggle to establish an independent state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab east Jerusalem.

Mr. Abu Medein drew harsh criticism from the United States and Israel earlier this month when he announced that Palestinians caught selling land to Israelis should face the death penalty.

A Palestinian land dealer was found murdered in Ramallah a few days later. A suspected land dealer was found slain a week later, and a third has been missing for several weeks.

Israeli officials have accused the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) of complicity in the deaths, but Mr. Abu Medein denied that. All suspected land dealers will be arrested and tried, he said. If found guilty, they will be sentenced either to life in prison or the death penalty.

Mr. Abu Medein said the PNA had not created the law, but simply adopted it from Jordan, which ruled the West Bank between 1948 and 1967.

Jordan sentenced about 150 land sellers to death, and executed about 10 of them, he said.

Israel has condemned the Palestinian threat to execute land sellers as racist, but Mr. Abu Medein said it was intended to protect Palestinians against claims of Israeli sovereignty over land bought and settled by Jews.

"If Jews buy land in Arab areas, they want Israeli rule to come to that area," he said.

The most egregious example, Palestinians say, is Jabal Abu Ghneim — Har Homa in Hebrew — the Jerusalem hillside where Israel is building a 6,500-unit settlement for Jews. Most of the land was owned by Jews who bought it from Palestinians after 1967, when it was part of the West Bank.

"Because some of the land was bought by Jews, Israel used it for political purposes and look where we are now," Mr. Abu Medein said.

Palestinian anger over the housing project led to a breakdown in Israel-Palestinian talks and weeks of rioting in the West Bank.

If Israelis want to be able to buy land in the West Bank and Gaza, Mr. Abu Medein said, the Palestinians have land claims of their own inside Israel. "We own 92 per cent of the country... And we have the papers that prove it," he said.

Khatami pledges not to interfere in Arab-Israeli peace process

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's President-elect Mohammad Khatami pledged on Tuesday that Tehran would not place obstacles in the way of the Middle East peace process.

He said however at his first press conference since Friday's election that he took a dim view of the peace process.

"They cannot talk about peace and at the same time ignore the most fundamental rights of the Palestinians," he said. "If peace means imposing the wish of an aggressive government on the Palestinians and Arab nations, we do not see it that way."

Mr. Khatami, who is due to take office in August, nevertheless pledged not to interfere in the U.S.-sponsored peace process. "We also are for peace, but on the condition that the rights of all parties are provided," he said.

"Of course we do not interfere and leave it to the Palestinians and the region's other peoples to decide," he said. "But we reserve the right to express our views."

Trial of Baqoura shooter opens; Dakamseh pleads not guilty

By Rana Husseini
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Ahmad Dakamseh, a soldier accused of killing seven Israeli schoolgirls on March 13, entered a plea of not guilty at the opening session of his military trial yesterday.

Corporal Dakamseh told the five judges in the packed military court in Naour that he was not guilty of all charges.

Charges levelled against Corp. Dakamseh were listed as: premeditated murder, attempted murder, menacing use of a firearm and military mutiny.

Corp. Dakamseh, clad in a prisoner's uniform of green overalls, appeared calm, behind bars in the Fourth Mechanised Division's auditorium, where his relatives, security officers and dozens of local and international reporters gathered.

He petitioned the court to name an additional four attorneys to his defence team already composed of four well-known lawyers.

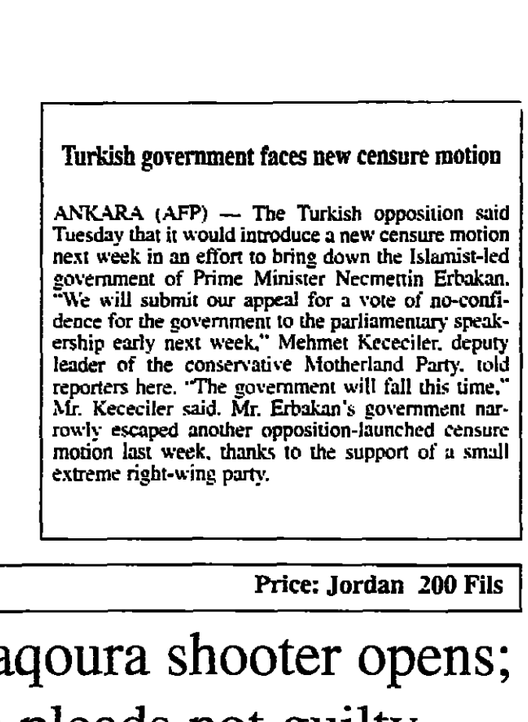
Later, Corp. Dakamseh demonstrated fury as the court clerk read the charge sheet.

When the said clerk read an allegation that Corp. Dakamseh had previously attempted to kill Israelis visiting the area, and that he was "sexually aroused" by the sight of the schoolgirls, he sprang up, beat the iron cage and shouted that the allegations were lies.

The soldier's mother and wife, breaking into tears several times during the one-hour court session, chanted slogans in his support before and during the court session:

"Do not be afraid and keep your head high, we are with you and God is also with you," they said in unison.

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Corporal Ahmad Daqamseh behind bars during his military trial which opened Tuesday. The defendant who is accused of shooting and killing Israeli teenagers on March 13 pleaded 'not guilty' (photo by Yousef 'Allan)

Algerian security kills 134 Islamist militants — reports

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian security forces have killed more than 130 militants in several offensives ahead of legislative elections next month, press reports said Tuesday.

The Al Khabar daily said some 120 guerrillas had died near Ouarsenis, 250 kilometres southwest of Algiers, in one of the biggest operations by security forces since Algeria's civil war began in early 1992.

A further 14 militants were killed in the Tlemcen district 540 kilometres west of the capital.

The Ouarsenis offensive centres on a zone that forms the headquarters of Ahmad Benaicha, number two in the Islamic Salvation Army, the armed wing of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

Some 200 of his men are in the region, and a price of 4.5 million dinars ($90,000) has been put on Benaicha's head, according to posters stuck up in recent days.

The operation, which Al Khabar said was begun on the basis of information from two informers, has not been officially confirmed.

Meanwhile, two civilians were found with their throats cut Sunday at Ksar Al Boukhari, 120 kilometres south of Algiers.

At Draa Benkehdda, 90 kilometres east of the capital, a car-bomb on Monday injured five people, two of them seriously, according to press reports.

Legislative elections are due on June 5. Militant groups have been accused of a series of car-bombs and massacres since the election campaign opened on May 15.

More than 100 people have been killed, according to partial tolls.

The government has pledged to ensure the elections take place in perfect security, and have announced a series of sweeps across the country.

Western estimates are that more than 60,000 people have been killed in the Algerian conflict since 1992, when the government cancelled a runoff election that the FIS was poised to win.

Jordan urges Ankara to pull troops from northern Iraq

AMMAN (Agencies) — Jordan Tuesday described Turkey's invasion of northern Iraq as a violation of that country's sovereignty and urged Ankara to withdraw its troops immediately to avoid a dangerous escalation in the region.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman in Amman was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as expressing "the Jordanian government's deep concern over the Turkish forces incursion deep into Iraqi territory which is a violation of that country's territorial integrity."

"Continuation of the military operations will lead to a dangerous escalation which will serve no one," said the spokesman.

He urged the Turkish government to pull out its forces from northern Iraq to avoid further deterioration of the situation.

More than 10,000 Turkish troops, allied with Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) poured into northern Iraq last Wednesday in pursuit of Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels who Turkey claims they use the region as a base to launch raids into its territory.

Meanwhile, Jordan's 11 opposition parties Tuesday issued a statement describing the Turkish attack as "a dangerous aggression and part of a U.S.-Zionist plot to create tensions aimed at besieging Syria and Iran and embarrassing Iraq as well as weakening the Arab and Muslim countries which reject the U.S.-Zionist designs in this region."

"The Turkish attack which this time has been carried out in coordination with the Zionists and the Turkish military and backed by the United States came in the wake of a visit to Israel by the Turkish defence minister and as an embodiment of the Zionist-Turkish military alliance," charged the statement.

Noting that the Turkish aggression on northern Iraq constitutes a flagrant violation of that country's sovereignty and territorial integrity the statement said the new military venture is considered as an aggression directed against the whole Arab World.

Condemning the attack as directly endangering the security of both Syria and Iraq, the statement demanded that Ankara immediately pull out its forces and welcomed reports about a rapprochement between the Syrian and Iraqi leaderships.

It also appealed to the Arab countries to join rank in the face of this aggression and in defence of the Arab homeland.

Palestinians increasingly dissatisfied with Arafat, fed up with corruption, poll shows

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — While opposition to the peace process skyrockets in the West Bank, Arab east Jerusalem and Gaza, Palestinians are also increasingly dissatisfied with President Yasser Arafat's performance, and are more and more convinced that corruption in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is "widespread," a survey indicates.

According to a public opinion poll titled "Palestinian Attitudes Towards Current Issues" released a few days ago, opposition to the peace process has generally increased between April and May 1997 from 23 to 26 per cent.

Moreover, only 12.5 per cent of Palestinians support the Oslo Accord, while 55 per cent support it with caution, the poll, conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre, shows.

According to the survey, which has a margin error of three per cent and a confidence level of 95 per cent, 91 per cent of Palestinians believe the U.S. role in the peace process is "extremely biased in favour of Israel," while only 0.8 per cent think that it is "biased towards the Palestinians," and 0.4 per cent think it is "neutral."

The survey also shows a remarkable change in people's attitude towards the role of the PNA.

In comparison with April's results, May shows a 12 per cent sharp decrease in the percentage of people who think that the PNA's role is "good."

Together with the decline in people's trust in Palestinian leaders, (Mr. Arafat's approval rating fell from 43.4 in April to 39.8 per cent in May), Palestinians seem to have also lost trust in revolutionary movements. While Fateh is still on top of the list of the factions Palestinians trust most, (37.9 per cent), trailed much further behind by Hamas, (10.3 per cent), the percentage of those who "do not trust anyone" is 31.3, reaching up to 33.1 in Gaza alone.

When asked: "Which Palestinian political or religious personality you trust most," about one in four answered that he/she "does not trust anyone."

The April survey shows that the number of Palestinians who believe that corruption in the PNA is "widespread" increased from 34.8 per cent to 38.8 per cent in May, while the number of people who think that corruption hardly exists in the self-rule-areas decreased from 11.8 to 8.7 per cent.

The survey was conducted on a random sample of 1,185 Palestinians over the age of 18 from Jerusalem and the West Bank (750 people), and from the Gaza Strip (435 people), consisting of students (12.7 per cent), housewives (33.4 per cent), farmers/fishermen (2.1 per cent), unemployed (6.4 per cent), business persons (5.9 per cent), and employees (18.4 per cent).

Iran's presidential elections send unusual message for political Islam

By Anthony Shadid
The Associated Press



An Iranian woman talks on the phone with a new picture of Iranian president-elect Mohammed Khatami stuck on her computer on Tuesday. Mr. Khatami won the presidential seat by 20 million votes out of 29 million (Reuters photo)

CAIRO — They were contradictory faces of Islam.

In a Tehran park, Iranian women clutching newspapers chatted freely about the results of presidential elections in the Islamic Republic. Across the border in Afghanistan, women vanished behind doors as the tanks of Taleban fighters rumbled into their foe's last stronghold in Mazar Al Sharif.

The fall of the northern Afghan city on Saturday virtually completed the religious militia's quest for an Islamist state unmatched in its rigidity — just one day after Iranians elected a liberal as president, signaling their hopes for a milder and more tolerant form of Islamist rule.

The contrast makes clear that no easy label applies to political Islam. For Iran, long demonised by the West for its zealotry, the election challenges any black-and-white summation of the Islamic Republic, considered the standard-bearer of Islam.

The vote proves the maturity of a 1979 revolution that exhilarated Muslims everywhere, boldly proclaiming itself a model of revolutionary Islam that would sweep the region.

"There is rethinking under way," said Asef Bayat, an expert on Iran and professor at the American University in Cairo.

Dr. Bayat said Friday's election — the most fiercely contested since the revolution — raised questions about the role of individual freedom, tolerance and the rule of law.

At the same time, it forced a discussion of the degree to which Islam should shape daily life.

That sort of debate is a far cry from the images seared onto the collective memory of the West by Iran's revolution: the seizure of the U.S. embassy, the holding of Americans as hostages and the execution of hundreds of people.

On Sunday in Tehran's Revolution Square, hundreds of young supporters of the winner, Mohammad Khatami, passed out sweets and roses in celebration of a president they hope will ease religious strictures.

Al Hayat, the Arab World's most influential newspaper, ran a front-page picture of young Iranian women, their veils revealing their faces and hair, taking part in a lively discussion about the election. The image was striking for the way it so contradicted stereotypes of veiled women, who often are depicted in the West as downtrodden.

Unlike Muslim women in Saudi Arabia, for instance, Iranian women have the right to vote, work, drive cars and serve in parliament.

The far-reaching effects of the election, of course, are still unclear. But Abdul Karim Soroush, an Iranian intellectual renowned for his criticism of clergy rule, called Friday's outcome "a flood that has been released after years of building up."

The president-elect has suggested that, to the degree he is able, he wants to dismantle some of the intrusiveness of Islam. Mr. Khatami told Zanan, a prominent women's monthly magazine in Iran, that he sees no obstacles to women becoming government ministers.

Such a statement by a clergyman and president of the Islamic Republic would likely horrify Taleban religious fighters in Afghanistan, whose version of Islam has been condemned as medieval by Iranian leaders.

There, not only are women barred from working and going to school, but a recent decree insisted that everyone must paint their windows black to guard against passers-by peeking at women inside.

All Afghani men were ordered to grow beards, and government workers are forbidden to trim theirs.

When Taleban tanks, jeeps and armoured personnel carriers rolled into Mazar Al Sharif, women quickly fled inside to escape the conquerors' gaze, although they moved about the town on Sunday.

The split-picture of Islamist rule is not limited to Iran and Afghanistan. Iran also borders Turkey, another country struggling to find the appropriate role for Islam.

Turkey is renowned for militant secularism as much as Iran is known for revolutionary Islam. But in free elections in Turkey last year, an Islamist party won enough votes to form a coalition and install its leader as prime minister.

"The elections in Turkey and Iran are both indications that you can be a modern democrat and a good Muslim at the same time," said John Voll, an Islam expert and professor at Georgetown University in Washington.

Libyan envoys go to Syria, Qatar with summit invitations

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Envoys of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi arrived in Damascus and Doha Monday to extend invitations to a summit which will develop a joint Arab strategy for the 21st century.

Colonel Abu Bakr Yunes Jaber, the head of the Libyan armed forces, arrived Monday morning in Damascus with a message for Syrian President Hafez Al Assad from Colonel Qadhafi.

He then met Palestinian opposition figures in the country for discussions about "the situation on the Arab scene," and stressed to them the need for the Arab summit, Maher Taher, spokesman of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) told AFP.

Col. Jaber had earlier gone to Egypt as part of his mission.

Meanwhile, Libyan Colonel Mustapha Kharubi flew into Qatar Monday, his third stop on a tour of Arab Gulf countries after Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

There, he delivered a message to the emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, the official Qatari News Agency (QNA) said.

A third Libyan envoy, Major Khueildi Hmeidi, had been sent to Algeria and Morocco.

Col. Qadhafi said in a Qatari television interview Sunday night, "I have sent messages to my brother Arab leaders inviting them to a meeting to define their future over the 1,000 days left before the 21st century.

King launches water...

(Continued from page 1)

come where everyone of us will concentrate on his work and where the man in charge at the Veterinary Union will not threaten to submit his resignation or present his resignation to protest the amendments of the press law because I do not understand the relationship between veterinary [medicine]and journalism," the King said.

The King was referring to the resignation of five heads of professional unions, including the head of the Veterinary Association, to protest the new amendments. The temporary law drew wide range of criticism from inside and outside Jordan.

King Hussein also spoke of breaking the impasse in the Middle East peace process, reiterating that Jordan was ready to mediate between Israel and its Arab neighbours, including Syria, to overcome the deadlock in the peace talks that followed the election of a right-wing government in Israel.

"On the political arena... We are for a just and comprehensive peace, and we are ready to extend, within our maximum energy and ability, to reach our goal... and when anybody needs us seriously to achieve this peace, they will find us beside them helping them to overcome any obstacle to reach the desired objective," the King said.

Meanwhile, an Israeli diplomat said Jordan and Israel will look for international donors to finance a railroad between the two countries in order to facilitate exporting goods through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

Jacob Rosen, chargé d'affaires at the Israeli embassy in Amman, said there are several international investors who are willing to take on the project, which is aimed at linking the two sides with railroad lines, one from Mafraq to the Israeli port of Ashdod and another from Aqaba to Eilat.

Mr. Rosen said the two sides have opened talks in Aqaba to discuss the expansion of the Aqaba Airport allowing it to be used by both sides. He said that Jordan has agreed "in principle" to this project.

"The airport will be international, used by Israeli and Jordanian planes. The airport needs expansion and development," Mr. Rosen added that Jordanian and Israeli experts were scheduled to discuss related legal and economic details. He said that the first stage of the project will start after three months.

Trial of Baqoura shooter...

(Continued from page 1)

The soldier's mother, Kamleh Hassan Ahmad Dakamseh, 62, interrupted the court session several times shouting statements of support and verses from the Holy Koran.

She was warned several times by the presiding judge of imminent expulsion from the tribunal.

Last April, Ms. Dakamseh pleaded for a fair trial for her son in a press conference and called on the government to ease a month-long security blockade on her village.

Following the conclusion of the opening session yesterday, however, she refused to answer questions by the press.

If convicted of the charges, Dakamseh could receive the death sentence, which according to Jordanian military law, cannot be appealed.

The military court headed by Judge Brigadier general Ma'moun Khasawneh and also comprised of Justices Colonel Yousef Faouri, Lieutenant Generals Aref Syouf, Mahmoud Obeidat and Major Fawaz Bqour, postponed the case for June 2 calling on the prosecution to present its witnesses and evidences.

Corp. Dakamseh was arrested on March 13, shortly after spraying Israeli schoolgirls, who were visiting the Baqoura area in the north of the Jordan Valley, with gunfire from his rifle, killing seven and injuring five, including a teacher.

According to the charge sheet, the soldier had confessed to planning to murder Israelis "more than once."

The sheet said that on the day of the incident, Corp. Dakamseh espied a bus transporting Israeli children, around the age of 10, but did not attack as he considered them too young.

When another bus transporting approximately 50 Israeli school girls, the sheet maintained, ages 12 to 14, arrived in the area, the soldier picked up his rifle and began shooting at the bus until his rifle jammed.

However, the defendant had told a three-member military committee that he had not planned the attack, but rather "committed the shooting out of a sense of national duty and to protect his military honour and national dignity," alleging that the schoolgirls "had provoked him by their loud laughter at seeing him performing his prayers."

The new attorneys who asked to be included in the defence team as volunteers are: President of the Jordan Bar Association (JBA) Hussein Mjali, President of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights Najib Rashdan, Hani Khasawneh and Riyad Nawyseh.

The current defence team includes Attorneys Ahmad Najdawi, Zahra Sharabati, Tha'er Najdawi and Rasha Ibrahim.

Egypt-Israel summit results in little progress

(Continued from page 1)

the summit a "last chance" to save the peace process and said the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) could return to armed struggle with Israel if the peace process failed.

Tuesday's summit "comes as an attempt, perhaps the last, to get out of the political crisis which was caused by Mr. Netanyahu's policy of settlement building and land confiscation," Colonel Rajoub said.

"I and every Fateh warrior in the (self-rule) authority must tell our people ahead of this summit that if the peace process collapses Fateh will be at the right hand of the Palestinian opposition in our historic role as leader of the Palestinian struggle," he said.

Mr. Arafat's Fateh faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization is the backbone of the self-rule authority's security forces.

Other small PLO factions and radical groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad have opposed Mr. Arafat's self-rule deals with Israel and led anti-Israeli violence against the accords.

Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Mubarak met amid tight security at the Tower Club Hotel in this beach resort as an Egyptian gunboat patrolled off the coast.

Mr. Netanyahu was accompanied by close aides and Foreign Minister David Levy while Mr. Mubarak was joined by Prime Minister Kamal Ganzuri and Foreign Minister Amr Musa.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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PROGRAMME TWO
15:35 French Programmes
16:00 America's Funniest People
16:30 Spell Binder
16:50 Doc. — Forests of the World
17:30 Border Town
18:00 French Programmes
19:00.....News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Grace Under Fire
20:10 Challenges
21:10 Drama — Spencer for Hire
22:00 News in English
22:30 Cobra
23:15 Hart to Hart

PRAYER TIMES

03:55 Fajr
05:27(Sunrise)Duha
12:33 Dhuhr
16:13.....'Asr
19:38.....Maghreb
21:10.....'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
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Amman International Church Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Unstable air mass will affect the southeastern parts of the Kingdom so it will be dusty with skies partly cloudy. Moderate weather conditions will prevail in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom, with winds northwesterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, it will be hot and dusty, winds northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

Amman 16/30
Aqaba 23/38
Deserts.....15/34
Jordan Valley 20/35
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 31, Aqaba 39 Humidity readings: Amman 27 per cent, Aqaba 29 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi 894788
Dr. Bassam Karadsheh ..759200
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad ...846070
Dr. Khalid Abdo 657129
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy ...890280
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy ..636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir ...276852
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi 989601
Khalifeh pharmacy ...985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police.....843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints.....661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints.....897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs.....623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3
Al-Bashir, ...775111/26
Army, Marka.....891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital.....674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ..865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00..... Damascus (RJ)
08:35 Larnaca (RJ)
09:05 Jeddah(RJ)
09:50 ..Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
15:40....New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:40..Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:00 Paris (RJ)
18:05 Istanbul (RJ)
18:45 ...Brussels, Vienna (RJ)
19:05 Rome (RJ)
19:15 London, Frankfurt (RJ)
19:20 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
00:10.....Beirut (RJ)
01:10 Cairo (RJ)
04:55.....Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights

09:15 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
10:30..... Cairo (MS)
11:00 ...Sanaa, Hudaidah (IY)
12:00 Jeddah (SV)
13:10 Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:30 Tunis (TU)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
16:20 Algiers (AH)
17:00 Doha (Q7)
19:30....Istanbul, Damascus (PK)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
21:10 ...Paris, Damascus (AF)
21:30 Tel Aviv (LY)
23:20 Istanbul (TK)
23:25 Amsterdam (KL)
23:30 Athens (OA)
05:15.....Ankara (TK)

DEPARTURES

10:50 Rome (RJ)
10:50 ..Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:45 Berlin, London (RJ)
12:30.....Casablanca (RJ)
12:45 Istanbul (RJ)
20:20 Colombo (RJ)
20:35 Beirut (RJ)
21:05 ...Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
21:10 Cairo (RJ)
21:15.....New Delhi (RJ)
21:45..Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:50 Bombay (RJ)
22:05 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
23:40 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

06:50.....Larnaca (CY)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
09:25 London (BA)
10:00 Damascus, Istanbul (PK)
11:20 Cairo (MS))
12:00...Hudaidah, Sanaa (IY)
13:30 Jeddah (SV)
14:00 ..Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
15:30.....Tunis (TU)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
17:20 Shariqah (AH)
17:50 Doha (Q7)
20:15 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
22:50 Tel Aviv (LY)
23:55 .. Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:25 Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)
00:25 Ankara (TK)
04:00.....Athens (OA)
06:15.....Istanbul (TK)

Prime minister urges media, parents, schools to encourage vocational training

AMMAN (Petra) — At the opening session of a three-day vocational training conference, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali called on graduates to focus on vocational training as a remedy for their job search.

In a speech, delivered on his behalf by Minister of Labour Saleh Khasawneh, the premier also called on parents to encourage their children to learn trades.

"I seize this opportunity to address graduates of academic institutions as well as their parents to seek qualification in the industrial, agricultural and service sectors, instead of waiting to procure employment with the already saturated public administration," he said.

"It is also the duty of educational institutions and the Jordanian society as a whole to encourage trades and manual work," he added. "The media also has a responsibility to eradicate erroneous concepts regarding trades and manual labour."

"The time has come for Jordanians to change their views regarding manual labour and vocational training because the national economy's development rests with the community," according to Dr. Majali.

"We are on the threshold of the 21st century and we expect competition in industry, trade and technology now that Jordan is joining the World Trade Organisation and the world continues to witness an information and technology revolution," he stated. "The global community will now only accept goods which conform to internationally accepted standards of high quality, catering to the requirements of ISO-9000."

The development of human resources is a main priority of the present government which seeks to improve product quality, enhance the national economy and open new markets abroad for national exports in the face of strong trade competition, he added.

Voicing the government's support for the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), the prime minister affirmed that the government recently studied and endorsed a draft law regarding the organisation of trades and referred it to Parliament for debate.



Minister of Labour Saleh Khasawneh attends the opening session of a three-day vocational training conference (Petra photo)

The draft law is expected to qualitatively change the promotion of vocational training programmes and help industries abide by required quality specifications, he said.

The government highly values VTC programmes, designed to help the unemployed find jobs in cooperation with the private sector, according to Dr. Majali.

VTC Director General Ali Nasrallah also addressed the conference, affirming that VTC centres have heretofore graduated 120,000 skilled workers to labour in local and regional markets.

A total of 4,100 factories and industrial businesses have been working with the VTC in offering training to graduates, he added.

The VTC is striving to meet the government's objectives of providing vocational training to 50 per cent of male students and 35 per cent of female students by the year 2000, Mr. Nasrallah confirmed.

He described the draft law on vocational training as aimed at organising trades, boosting vocational training programmes and helping to reorganise the labour market in the Kingdom.

He thanked German and Japanese specialised agencies which, he said, have been providing the VTC with much needed assistance to implement its tasks.

According to Head of the Conference Preparatory Committee Farouk Nimri, conference delegates will cover a wide range of topics including how to best adapt workers to the needs of labour markets, vocational training in Jordan and how the private sector and non-governmental organisations might invest in vocational training projects.

The estimated 300 participants from the Arab World, representing 140 national institutions and 15 international organisations, will review 23 reports related to vocational training.

Public sector doctors to receive 60% overtime allowance

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A total of 2,500 doctors working at the Ministry of Health will benefit from a 60 per cent overtime allowance, based on their respective basic salaries, as endorsed by the Cabinet yesterday, according to Bassam Keswani, a Jordan Medical Association (JMA) board member.

In an interview with the Jordan Times Tuesday, Dr. Keswani affirmed that as a result of a meeting, held between Minister of Health Ashraf Kurdi and the JMA council, the Council of Ministers agreed to raise public sector doctor overtime allowances from 30 to 60 per cent.

Although 60 per cent "may seem a large sum of money," he said, "in fact the raise only translates to JD 52 for a newly-appointed doctor."

Last year, the JMA and the government signed a memorandum of understanding which stipulated an allowance increase of 30 per cent. However, the memorandum was roundly criticised by the medical profession as the allowance and salary increases were considered minimal.

Ever since the government amended the associations law in 1992, the JMA has been negotiating with the government to change certain legislation pertaining thereto.

A major amendment rejected by the JMA, according to Dr. Keswani, was connecting so-called incentive allowances with overtime allowances.

The incentive allowances have traditionally been based on the individual doctor's experience and specialisation, but the government terminated the incentive allowance and connected it with overtime, which the doctors felt was unfair, he explained.

"Women doctors completely lost their incentive allowances as they do not work overtime," he added.

Public sector doctors and engineers are also requesting that the government modify the retirement law which is based on the basic salary and not on the actual received salary as is the case with other professionals.

"We welcome the new government decision and consider it a step in the right direction," he concluded.

Premier emphasises tourism in Cabinet meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — During Tuesday's Cabinet session, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali asked the ministers of finance, public works and housing and tourism and antiquities to assign land and formulate plans for the creation of resorts and parks in Petra to stimulate cultural and recreational tourism.

The following is a summary of the Cabinet session as given by Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi.

The Council of Ministers reviewed agriculture, tourism, water and financial, informational and decentralisation issues.

Dr. Majali reviewed the outcome of his Ministry of Agriculture meeting in which he announced that 10 to 15 million trees are to be planted in the Kingdom this year and reviewed ministry plans in other domains.

The prime minister also covered the U.N. University/International Leadership Academy, slated to initiate a workshop in Amman Sunday with the participation of 150 persons from 56 nations.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin discussed water pumped from Lake Tiberas to Jordan.

Israel will be allocating 30 million cubic metres of water (mcm) from the lake to the King Abdullah Canal in the Jordan Valley, of which 20 mcm will be pumped in the summer and 10 mcm during the winter, he explained.

Experimental pumping commenced last Sunday, according to Dr. Haddadin, as this water allotment to Jordan was provided for under the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty of 1994.

The project was stimulated as an outcome of a recent meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, he added.

Minister of Finance Suleiman Hafez gave a report regarding the rescheduling of Jordanian debts up to $400 million as concluded with the Paris Club and an additional $50 million with the club's non-member states.

These debts were originally scheduled for repayment between June of last year and the end of February in 1999, but have been rescheduled for repayment over the next 22 years.

Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf reported to the Cabinet regarding an agreement with the European Investment Bank to provide a loan of 15 million SDR (Special Drawing Rights) to finance a portion of the Amman-Aqaba Highway.

The Cabinet also endorsed a plan proffered by Dr. Mutawi, recommending the restructuring of government media institutions.

This includes a plan for the creation of two ministry departments — one serving as a data bank and the other for the Internet.

The Cabinet also debated allowances on salaries given to public sector employees (see above story).

Dr. Mutawi stated that competent committees from both Israel and Jordan were attempting to overcome obstacles currently impeding bilateral trade.

He concluded his summary of the meeting by describing the recent summit in Aqaba between His Majesty King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as good and as cause for optimism.

UNFPA official to arrive in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Nafis Sadik will arrive in Amman Friday on a three-day official visit to Jordan, according to a UNFPA press release.

Dr. Sadik will hold talks with senior officials on national, population and development issues as well as UNFPA assistance to Jordan, according to UNFPA Senior Programme Officer Lina Mousa.

He is also slated to give lectures to the International Leadership Programme, organised by the United Nations University, on "Leadership and global challenges since the International Conference on Population and Development" held in Cairo in 1994.

'Internet usage growing in Arab World'

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Internet usage is growing rapidly in the Arab World," visiting professor of anthropology Jon Anderson affirmed in an Internet lecture held at the American embassy last night.

"The only Arab countries which are not on-line are Syria, Iraq, and Libya — and these can be attributed to [the political atmosphere]," he explained.

Dr. Anderson explained that the Arab World is currently undergoing an information revolution.

He compared this revolution with that of the industrial revolution, but with the end result being knowledge instead of factories.

"The Internet is like an amoeba — a multiple organisation of knowledge available to any number of people," he said.

He explained that the Internet allows small newspapers, such as the Yemen Times, to be read overseas.

Dr. Anderson, a professor in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at Georgetown University, described future web sites in the region.

He said that one such site would provide an entire translation of the Holy Koran into five languages, while another would present excerpts from the Hadith.

"There is also a proposal to have a sort of question and answer site with the participation of a mullah in Iran," Dr. Anderson said.

He explained how a new bilingual web decoder in the market would enable readers to automatically translate their English texts into Arabic, and vice versa.

However, Internet usage in the Middle East is rapidly expanding as a tool of commerce, he said. "Professional knowledge, information and skills are available therein."

According to Dr. Anderson, the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at Georgetown will begin a project comparing the Arab experience of global Internet industrialisation with that of the United States and Europe.

He will also begin teaching a course this fall on information technology in the Middle East.

"Today's phase is to bring information and technology home to [the region]," he said.

Dr. Anderson is a professor at the Catholic University and adjunct professor at Georgetown University.

Kurdi opens regional health workshop

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi Monday opened a three-day regional meeting on environmental health with a call to the World Health Organisation (WHO) to pursue efforts in helping Eastern Mediterranean countries tackle problems related to environmental pollution and securing sufficient potable water.

The meeting is the sixth biennial meeting of the Centre for Environmental Health Activities (CEHA) Technical Advisory Committee.

Dr. Kurdi described the Amman-based CEHA as contributing to public awareness regarding environmental safety and boosting the potential of the region in controlling pollution.

The WHO and its affiliated agencies, including CEHA, are needed in the region to protect water resources from pollution, recycle waste water for agricultural use, ensure safe food production as well as minimise chemical contamination and assist refugees, he affirmed.

WHO Regional Director Hussein Gezairi sent a message describing the three-day meeting as an important milestone in the development of CEHA's activities and capabilities.

"This meeting is special as it provides a bridge into the next century and will be covering several important challenges for health and the environment for the 21st century," Dr. Gezairi stated.

"Projections state that the rapid population growth we are currently experiencing in the region will continue and that this will strain already scarce water and arable land resources. Rapid urban growth and the push towards industrialisation and increased chemical usage in industry and agriculture will continue unabated, with resultant congestion, pollution, housing shortages and increased health risks from environmental sources," he maintained.

"In the coming decades we will have to pay special attention to chemical safety, urbanisation, pollution controls, water supply and sanitation as well as reaction strategies for emergencies common in the region," Dr. Gezairi concluded.

John Haines, head of the WHO Chemical Safety Programme, told the delegates that the meeting will focus on environmental protection in sustainable economic development and modern methods for protection from chemical pollution and the disposal of dangerous waste.

Representatives from six nations, including Jordan, attended the meeting.

Group seeks to assess peace developments

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Representatives of American Leaders for Middle East Peace (ALMEP) are currently visiting the Arab World to assess peace developments and seek methods to aid the process.

ALMEP President Ken Gaub and Vice President Dan Wold arrived in the Kingdom Monday for the first leg of their tour, and plan on leaving for Syria today for a meeting tentatively scheduled with President Hafez Assad.

"We want a first-hand view on what is happening here," Mr. Gaub said. "Then we will take the facts back to our members and hopefully we can collectively influence millions."

Mr. Gaub was elected president four years ago of the 60,000 strong ALMEP, a non-aligned and non-denominational organisation, he said.

"We hope to meet directly with the leaders responsible for peace developments and understand the facts of the situation," Mr. Gaub said.

After leaving Damascus, the men plan on returning to Jordan in the hope of meeting with His Majesty King Hussein before travelling on to Egypt to speak with President Hosni Mubarak.

"I am a great fan of King Hussein and his efforts in the peace process, and we hope to meet with the King on Thursday," he said.

Mr. Gaub said that his organisation is capable of reaching the American public through the organisation's various members involved in radio, television, publications, and other media.

When the Jordan Times asked ALMEP to elucidate the biggest obstacle to peace, Mr. Gaub defined it as the hatred since biblical times between different peoples of the region.

"Each side has their reproaches, and both have their points," Mr. Gaub said. "[The peace process] must involve give and take from both sides."

He asserted that the situation requires a positive approach and that he believed most people sincerely want peace.

"The situation can improve once dialogue between leaders ensues," he said. "But you can't say one thing and do another."

That which originally sparked his interest in aiding the peace process were his world travels which have led him to 100 countries, he said.

"Everywhere I went, people yearned for peace," Mr. Gaub said.

ALMEP will continue its efforts to promote peace, he concluded.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

* "The Tailor of Gloucester" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.
* "While You Were Sleeping" at the American Centre Abdoun, at 5:00 p.m.

CONCERT

* Musical performance by the orchestra of the National Music Conservatory with the participation of visiting conductor Pu-Qi Jiang and the special appearance of James Lyon at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

SEMINAR

* "Kinds of Diabetes and Treatment" with the participation of Dr. Mohammad Arna'out, Dr. Abdul Karim Khawaldeh, and Dr. Mohammad Al Zahiri at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

PANEL DISCUSSION

* Media Forum: "Getting the Story: The Basics of Professional Journalism" (in Arabic) with the participation of Atef Jawad and Mahmoud Zawawi at the American Center, Abdoun at 4:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of Jordanian products at the Amman International Exhibit, Marj Al Hamam, until June 2.
* Works by Guy Ferrer at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until June 15.
* Spring Exhibition of Plastic Art '97 at Greater Amman Municipality, Ras Al 'Ain, until June 30.
* "One-of-a-Kind" artists' book exhibit, at the American Centre, Abdoun, until June 25.
* Works by Australian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre, until May 30.
* Exhibition of works by Farouq Lambaz at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until June 19. Also displaying works by Paris-based Moroccan artist Najia Mahadji, until June 12, as well as showing an exhibition by architectural photographer Said Nuseibah entitled "The Farthest Mosque" and by contemporary Arab artists.
* Works by Munir Al-Ubaidi at Hamourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until May 31.
* Spring exhibition '97 entitled "Spring is Blooming" at the Jordan River Designs (Tel. 613061/2), until May 31.
* Works by Omar Shahwan at Offali Art Gallery, Um Uthaina (Tel. 5526932), until May 29.
* Works by Issam Tantawi at Alia Art Gallery, Jabal Amman, until May 29.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Speaker mourns death

AMMAN (Petra) — Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi announced the death of Mohammad Ali Bdeir Tuesday. Mr. Bdeir was a senator and former deputy at Parliament. He was also a leading economist and entrepreneur.

Minister visits society

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamser Tuesday visited the Al Hussein Society for the Disabled and met with HRH Princess Majidah Ra'ad. He praised the society for its rehabilitation programmes for the disabled.

President meets visitors

AMMAN (Petra) — University of Jordan President Fawzi Garaibeh Tuesday met with British and American delegations currently visiting the Kingdom.

Ministry signs aviation agreement

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Transport Monday signed an agreement with the regional training centre of the Arab Air Carriers Organisation (AACO) regarding civil aviation and air transport training cooperation in the Arab World.

The agreement, signed by Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Bassam Saket and AACO Secretary General Abdul Wahab Tuffaha stipulates the government's offering facilities for the centre's use.

The agreement also exempts the centre from paying taxes and customs duty on equipment used in training and will offer the centre facilities in conducting contacts in the Arab World and facilitating the arrival of trainees to the Kingdom.

Last July, the AACO signed an agreement regarding the inauguration of the Amman centre to be funded by the European Union.

The centre began training programmes last October at a temporary site pending the construction of a permanent site at the cost of $750,000.

His Majesty King Hussein had earlier instructed the government to assign a suitable plot of land for the establishment of the training centre.

Also last year, AACO announced that 18 Arab airlines have agreed to send their employees to the AACO training centre currently being constructed in cooperation with the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

At the signing ceremony, Dr. Saket confirmed that the government has assigned a 10 dunum plot of land for the construction of the Amman centre.

A minimum of 2,500 trainees from the Arab World, including Jordan, will benefit from its services and training facilities, he said.

The centre provides training in air transport management, airline economics, operational costs, air cargo transportation services and air transport safety precautions.

As stipulated by the accord, various Arab airlines have pledged to provide financial backing to the AACO for five consecutive years and help with the centre's administration.

Kabila cracks down on political opposition

KINSHASA (R) — Self-proclaimed President Laurent Kabila has cracked down on political opposition in the Democratic Republic of Congo, extending a ban on political activities and public demonstrations to the capital Kinshasa.

But opposition militants said that they planned to go ahead with a march in the capital planned for Wednesday, with one spokesman likening the style of the new leadership in the former Zaire to that of ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

State television, meanwhile, reported that international flights to the capital would resume Tuesday with a flight by Belgian carrier Sabena but said that the river crossing to neighbouring Congo would stay closed until further notice.

State television announced the Kinshasa ban in a communique read on news bulletins, citing a need to protect public safety and property. The ban is until further notice.

"We haven't banned the parties, they exist but they cannot carry out any activities," Information Ministry spokesman Leyka Moussa Nyembo told Reuters.

"The parties stop being active until we have restored a bit of order," he said, describing the ban as nationwide.

Information Minister Raphael Ghenda told reporters the country was going through a difficult period and that political activities could currently cause things to get out of control.

"There's a time for everything and we are in a period during which we are setting up a government," he said.

Aides and allies of veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi said that Wednesday's planned march would go ahead.

"This is the kind of thing we are used to from the Mobutu period. These are neo-Mobutists who want to prevent our activity. We will ignore them totally," said Vianney Kabukanye, secretary general of the youth wing of Mr. Tshisekedi's Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS).

Joseph Olenghakoy, a Tshisekedi ally, said the march would "show the people's attachment to Kabila" but also its wishes.

Mr. Tshisekedi aide Laurent Mbayo confirmed the march would go ahead. "It's a march organised by the party," he said, but he distanced himself from Mr. Olenghakoy's views on the march.

Earlier, Mr. Kabila's justice minister, Celestin Louangy, said the law in the new Congo would be administered impartially. "We want to restore the confidence of the people. Everyone should feel protected," he said.

Opposition activists marched in Kinshasa Friday and Saturday. Kabila forces fired in the air and took away some protesters. Government officials said they were later released.

Mr. Kabila's ministers accuse Mr. Tshisekedi of deluding the people to feed his own ambition.

Mr. Tshisekedi aides say Mr. Kabila has flooded the capital with troops from Rwanda and other neighbours and accuse him of seeking to return to a one-party state. They say foreign troops must leave and call for political dialogue.

Mr. Tshisekedi, citing a 1992 vote in a sovereign national conference in what was then Zaire, has doggedly insisted over the years that constitutionally he is prime minister.

Kabila aides say there will be no post of prime minister in the new administration but that Mr. Kabila plans to name new ministers to increase the size of his government from 13 to 20.

His Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo marched into Kinshasa on May 17. They took up arms in October after the denial of Zairean nationality for ethnic Tutsis.

Mr. Kabila has said elections, a key demand of the U.N. and many Western nations, will have to wait for two years.

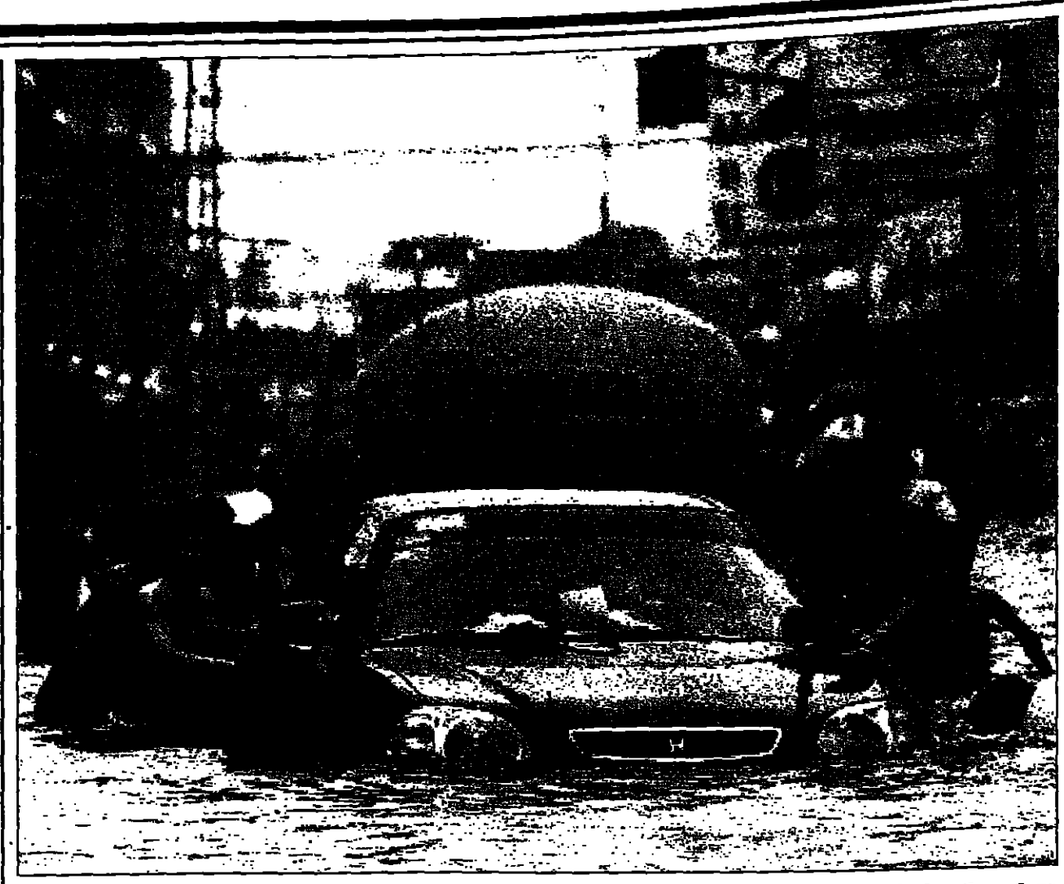
In Paris, the French foreign minister said after talks with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that France and the United States are working "together" to encourage a transition to democracy in the former Zaire.

Herve de Charette told journalists that "contrary to what you write, French and Americans are working together in this part of the world, as elsewhere."

Mr. De Charette said his talks with Mrs. Albright Monday had underlined the "very high quality of Franco-American relations." The two countries "agreed on the essentials" he said.

During the talks, both sides expressed "concern" over the humanitarian crisis in that east of the country, and their desire "to rapidly install democratic institutions."

Mrs. Albright said she and Mr. De Charette had "considered how the two nations can support democracy and human rights" in the former Zaire.



Filipino residents push a stalled car along floodwaters in a Manila street. At least 53 people have died as three days of torrential rains pummeled a wide area of the Philippines, flooding thousands of homes and bringing the Philippine capital to a standstill (Reuter photo)

Flash floods leave 53 dead in Philippines

MANILA (AFP) — The Philippines was mopping up Tuesday after flash floods left 53 dead and 77,000 displaced as parts of the country were put on a disaster footing, officials said.

The death toll rose as rescue workers dug through collapsed masonry and the debris of landslides, with several people still reported missing.

Manila residents, who had to wade through waist-high water Monday, were seen sweeping up debris from streets, although some smaller side streets remained under several inches of murky flood waters.

Businesses reopened and operations at Manila airport resumed Tuesday, after two days of heavy rains.

Tens of thousands of people whose homes were threatened by the floodwaters have been evacuated to evacuation centres, the National Disaster Coordinating Council said.

Teams of health workers have been sent to the evacuation centres to monitor the situation particularly in those areas worst hit, Health Secretary Carmencita Reodica said.

The Weather Bureau said the tropical depression was moving away from the northern Philippines, although south west monsoon rains were expected in the next few days.

"Metropolitan Manila is getting a break. We don't expect rains as bad as yesterday," Nancy Alega, forecasting supervisor of the Philippine Weather Bureau told AFP.

But parts of the country were already battening down for typhoons and monsoon rains.

Defence Secretary Renato de Villa said he would ask President Fidel Ramos to expand those places listed as disaster areas which will give them top priority in government aid efforts.

"Some of these areas are already recovering as of this date. We're hoping the recovery will continue so we can proceed to normalise everything within the next 24 hours," Mr. De Villa said.

The death toll mounted with eight more fatalities reported from Subic, northwest of Manila, a local official said in an interview over Radio DZMM.

Four of the eight people were buried in a landslide at the height of Monday's rains, two drowned, one man who was electrocuted and another who suffered a heart attack at an evacuation centre. Three children were missing in the landslide.

Four teenagers also died Sunday, while 16 others were injured in Lubao, north of here, after being hit by a drunk driver during a religious procession amid heavy rains, provincial police investigator Mario Dulin said.

The Social Welfare Department of the region north of Manila also said seven people died in the province of Bulacan during the floods, although it did not say what the cause of death was.

Manila International Airport struggled to clear a backlog as passengers who missed flights Monday were flown out on available flights Tuesday.

"We are almost getting back to normal with our flight operations," said airport general manager, francisco Atayde, adding he expected everything to be back to normal late Tuesday.

Chaos reigned at the airport Monday as floodwaters entered the airport's electromagnetic circuit room, causing damage and tripping power.

Disaster relief officials around the Pinatubo volcano north of Manila said Tuesday there were "no untoward incidents" or mass evacuations of residents due to mudflow from the volcano.

However, some 1,188 families or 7,128 people were brought to evacuation centres during the heavy rains.

But government officials warned that the mudflow coming from debris on the flanks of the Pinatubo volcano had breached parts of dikes running along two rivers in Zambales causing an estimated six million pesos ($230,769) in damage.

Manila holds 21 Chinese off disputed South China Sea shoal

MANILA (AFP) — Philippine authorities have detained 21 Chinese fishermen off the disputed Scarborough shoal in the South China Sea drawing protests from the Chinese embassy, official sources here said Tuesday.

The fishermen, aboard one boat, were intercepted by a Philippine Navy ship about seven nautical miles south east of the shoal on the night of May 20, and were taken to a Coast Guard station in the town of Subic, northwest of here, military sources here said.

Foreign Department sources earlier said a Chinese embassy official told them the arrests occurred on May 21.

The Philippine government has lodged criminal charges of poaching against the Chinese at a lower court in the town of Iba, near Subic, the sources said. Scarborough shoal is about 120 nautical miles south west of Iba.

Chinese embassy Consul General Shi Bingyi protested the arrests at the Foreign Department Tuesday, and demanded their immediate release, department sources said.

An embassy spokesman however told AFP he was unaware of the arrests. Mr. Shi was unavailable for comment.

The Chinese protest was lodged amid three days of bilateral talks in Beijing, scheduled to end Wednesday, focussing on their overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Last month the Philippines protested to China over the presence of armed Chinese vessels off a Filipino-garrisoned island in the Spratly chain.

Beijing later accused the Philippine navy of turning back a civilian Chinese flotilla from Scarborough, which lies on the eastern edge of the MacClesfield Bank, southeast of the Paracel Islands, and of planting a Philippine flag on the rock.

China claims the entire Paracels, the Spratlys and the MacClesfield Bank, while the Philippines argues part of the Spratlys and the Scarborough area are within its exclusive economic zone.

The other claimants to some or all of the Spratlys or Paracel Islands are Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam.

The Chinese consul-general told Filipino officials their fishermen had every right to fish near the Scarborough Shoal since it was Chinese territory, and demanded they be released outright, the sources said.

However, the Philippine Foreign Department responded saying it had the right to arrest the fishermen since the area was under Philippine sovereignty.

The consul then sought the Manila government's permission for embassy personnel to visit the detained men, the sources said.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen urged Tuesday a cooling of tensions with the Philippines over the continued wrangling over the South China Sea.

"Both China and the Philippines should try to understand each other and exercise self-restraint," the China Daily quoted Mr. Qian as saying during a meeting with visiting Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Rodolfo Severino.

"Disputes are inevitable sometimes between countries and especially between neighbouring countries," Mr. Qian said.

Mr. Severino was in Beijing for the bilateral talks.

Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan maintained in an earlier meeting with Mr. Serevino that the Scarborough Shoal was an integral part of Chinese territory.

Canada's Chretien seeks to boost western support

CALGARY, Alberta (R) — Prime Minister Jean Chretien flew into western Canada Wednesday to shore up his defences, sagging under attacks by the right-wing Reform Party over the dominance of Quebec politicians in Canada.

Despite winning a strong parliamentary majority in the 1993 election, Mr. Chretien's ruling Liberals won only 10 of 58 seats in reform's strongholds of Alberta and British Columbia, and were aiming to do better in the June 2 election.

But a Reform ad suggesting that Quebec politicians, including Mr. Chretien, might let the country fall apart, appears to have tapped into western anger and jeopardised Liberal plans.

In Reform leader Preston Manning's hometown of Calgary, Mr. Chretien lit into Mr. Manning as divisive, while appealing to a vision of a country where dreams can become reality.

"Here is a clear choice of two visions: There is a narrow vision that appeals to division, to intolerance and to exclusion, that appeals to a nostalgia for a past that never was," he said.

"And there is a Liberal vision based in a belief in a better future, in a sense of community and common purpose, in the recognition that this will not be a good country for any of us until it is a good country for all of us."

A Reuters poll released Monday showed surging support for Reform in the west and a tight race among other parties in Quebec, although the Liberals retained a comfortable overall lead in Canada.

It put Reform near or above its levels achieved in the 1993 election in Alberta and British Columbia, where it took 46 seats and came within a whisker of forming the official opposition. The margin of error for regional samples was higher than the 3.2 points for the nation as a whole.

Some commentators have even begun to question if Energy Minister Anne McClellan of Alberta and Transport Minister David Anderson of British Columbia might lose their seats.

Ms. McClellan — standing at Mr. Chretien's side as he pleaded with his Calgary crowd for more Alberta representation — won by only 12 out of 35,000 ballots in 1993. But Liberal strategists insisted she had won respect from the oil industry while in office.

For 28 out of the past 29 years, Canada's prime ministers have been from French-speaking Quebec, where the debate has raged over whether to secede from Canada.

Both Mr. Chretien and Conservative leader Jean Charest, also from Quebec, talk about making further constitutional concessions to the province, leading some to hope for national reconciliation, but alienating others.

"To a certain extent I think the attitude in the west is that Quebec has held the rest of the country ransom for the separatist issue," Neil Campbell, an office worker, said as he walked past a restaurant where Mr. Chretien was speaking.

Earlier at a factory in the prairie city of Winnipeg, Manitoba, machine operator Martin Friesen told Reuters he also thought there were too many Quebec politicians.

"Quebeckers get a lot of stuff already," he said as Mr. Chretien proclaimed the benefits of government intervention.

Reform's message, while possibly solidifying its support in the west, did not appear to have budged its support in vote-rich Ontario, where the Liberals maintained a 35-point stranglehold in the polls.

But one in three Canadians had still not made up their mind — as borne out by a stroll through the government.

Police search for bodies of Kashmir hostages

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Kashmir police have launched a search for the bodies of four Westerners who were kidnapped in 1995 and are believed to have been murdered by Muslim militants, officials said Tuesday.

Meanwhile, witnesses said businesses closed Tuesday to protest a crackdown by security troops against suspected Muslim militants in Srinagar.

A large number of police, backed by paramilitary personnel, started the search for the hostages' bodies around Kokernag village, about 85 kilometres south of here, they said.

The search continued Tuesday, officials said.

A Muslim guerrilla and a Pakistani arrested this month reportedly told police that the foreigners had been killed and buried in dense forests around mountainous Kokernag.

American Donald Hutchings, Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan and German Dirk Hassert were kidnapped by Al Faran militants while trekking in Kashmir in July 1995.

Abdul Mateen, a commander of the Harkat-Ul-Ansar who was arrested this month, told Indian troops the hostages were killed by Al-Faran abductors. India suspects Al-Faran to be a splinter of the Harkat.

"We are trying to find out if the hostages have been indeed killed or not," P.S. Gill, inspector general of police, who is heading the search team said.

"We cannot announce anything unless we are sure the (arrested) militants are speaking the truth," Mr. Gill said.

Another American, John Childs, who was also abducted, managed to escape while a Norwegian, Hans Christian-Ostro, was beheaded by the abductors after Indian authorities refused to free 15 jailed guerrillas.

Mr. Hutchings, 42, Mr. Wells, 23, Mr. Mangan, 23, and Mr. Hassert, 26, have not been heard of for months although they were periodically sighted by villagers in the Kashmir valley and neighbouring Doda mountains earlier.

Al Faran claimed responsibility for the abductions in July 1995 and demanded the release of 15 jailed comrades. India rejected the swap and the rebels broke off contact in November 1995.

In June 1996, Indian authorities conducted a 12-day search on information from another Harkat-Ul-Ansar militant that the four were buried in Magam Rakh Woods. Nothing was found.

The families of the four hostages have visited the Himalayan valley four times since 1996 to appeal for help.

The United States last November promised a $2 million reward for information and the Kashmir state government responded in December with an offer of $28,500.

In Srinagar, traders' and transporters' forums, called a day-long strike to protest a stepped-up search for Muslim militants by Indian soldiers in this bustling Kashmiri city.

Businesses remained shut in Srinagar and elsewhere in the valley Tuesday, officials said.

Witnesses said hundreds of people staged demonstrations Monday in the town of Kargil to protest the rape of a teenaged Shiite girl allegedly by four soldiers earlier this week.

Karadzic denies any role in war crimes

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has denied any role in war crimes during the Bosnian conflict, in an interview with a Dutch regional newspaper.

"I don't mind taking responsibility for actions the police and army may have committed. But I cannot take responsibility for what individual citizens did to one another. It was really a continuation of World War II," Mr. Karadzic told the daily Drentse Dagblad received here Monday.

Mr. Karadzic is accused by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes over his role in the almost four-year siege of Sarajevo and the massacres of Muslim civilians after the fall of Srebrenica in northeastern Bosnia in July 1995.

In the interview, Mr. Karadzic said that when he still held political responsibility, he wanted all "war criminals to be brought to justice." "During the war, our tribunals handed down 5,000 sentences, including 4,500 on Serbs," he said. He said his policy had made him a butt of criticism from Bosnian Serb extremists who accused him of being "too soft."

Mr. Karadzic has lived a reclusive existence in his stronghold of Pale near Sarajevo, since the the Hague tribunal issued an international warrant for his arrest. He said he was "prepared" to appear before the tribunal "on condition that it be impartial and not a political tool... and on condition that Croa-tian President Franjo Tudj-man and (Bos-nian President Alija) Izet-begovic be prosecuted too."

"It was not the Serbs who invented ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia; it was the Croats during World War II," he said, adding that "everybody knows that Izetbegovic wore a German uniform."

On Srebrenica, Mr. Karadzic said that "in the last few months before the enclave fell, the Muslims were launching daily attacks, killing at least one Serb a day. We had at least 1,260 dead," he said.

He said the capture of Srebrenica had not been planned. "We habitually retaliated to all the Muslim attacks. We did so in July 1995 and all of a sudden, we found ourselves advancing. Later, it emerged that Izetbegovic had ordered his troops to pull back," Mr. Karadzic said.

Regarding the thousands of Muslim men and teenagers from Srebrenica who were massacred, Mr. Karadzic said he could "not rule out that there may have been acts of personal revenge."

Mr. Karadzic said he had "done everything to avoid war" in Bosnia. He said he had accepted a plan on land-sharing submitted by the European Union in Lisbon. "The sad thing is that this agreement was very similar to that of Dayton, so why did we have to fight for four years?" he said.

Albanian doctors strike after hospital attack; 3 more dead

TIRANA (AP) — Hundreds of doctors and nurses at Albania's best hospital went on strike, demanding protection after a special police force attacked the facility out of anger that one of its officers died there.

Two staff members were wounded in Sunday's rampage by about 30 armed men who arrived in two armoured personnel carriers and dozens of vehicles. The attack illustrated the depth of anarchy, fear and mistrust in this violence-wracked land.

Three more people were killed overnight in different incidents around the country.

On Sunday, the special forces unit — which also guards President Sali Berisha — brushed aside army guards, fired at walls and beat the deputy director of the hospital and one guard. Nurses said Monday that the guard has lost his memory after his head was beaten with a rifle butt.

Some 600 doctors and nurses at the Tirana Military Hospital, a dilapidated three-storey facility that is nonetheless Albania's best, stopped all but emergency work Monday, demanding better protection.

"We cannot work under these conditions," said chief nurse Margarita Minai. "We are helping others to survive. If this situation continues, we will just take off our white coats."

Defence Minister Shaqir Vukaj, visiting the hospital, said the situation was "one of the most tragic" since violence erupted in January.



Afghan fighters of the Taleban Islamic militia gather at the Sharabat village, some five kilometres from the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e-Sharif. General Abdul Malik, one of General Dostum's key commanders, captured the city after a revolt against him, switching sides to the Islamic Taleban militia (Reuter photo)

Friction reported between Afghan Taliban and nervous new allies

MAZAR-E-SHARIF, Afghanistan (AFP) — Friction between Taleban fighters and those of an opposing military commander who went over to the Islamic militia has erupted into violence, sources said Tuesday.

Followers of General Abdul Malik, a former associate of northern warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, refused to hand weapons over to Taleban guards, the sources said. They added there had been several incidents Monday and Tuesday.

Mr. Malik went over to the Taleban last week at the start of a rebellion within Gen. Dostum's ranks that culminated in the warlord losing his Mazar-e-Sharif stronghold in northern Afghanistan. Gen. Dostum is now in Turkey.

The town was quiet Tuesday but most shops have ignored a Taleban order to reopen.

The population appears very nervous and the streets empty at the slightest sign of trouble, correspondents said.

Mazar-e-Sharif airport is still closed to civilian traffic and the Uzbekistan frontier sealed off, sources said.

There was a reduced military presence in the city Tuesday but Taleban fighters were starting to replace Gen. Abdul Malik's troops at key points.

The Taleban were said to be moving more troops north into the former opposition territory but they were being sent on toward Takha province to fight followers of Ahmad Shah Ma-sood, the former military commander of ousted Presi-dent Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Takha and Badakshan provinces in northeast Afghanistan are the only ones still controlled by Commander Masood. The guerrilla commander was understood to have withdrawn into the Panjshir Valley at the south of the Hindu Khush Mountains, where he made his name in the 1980s fighting the Soviet occupiers.

Mr. Rabbani is reported to have fled to Tajikistan and Commander Masood is the only major warlord still fighting the Taleban, who have now been recognised by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.

Informed sources said Taleban troops had now entered Talkhan, 200 kilometres east of Mazar-e-Sharif but fighting was still going on, indicating the town had not completely fallen.

The Taleban took the Shiite Muslim district of Zaraat in Talkhan during the night, witnesses said. They disarmed the population, including fighters of the pro-Iranian Hezb-i-Wahdat militia, which is part of the anti-Taleban alliance.

Most of the Hezb militia are now in Bamiyan province, which has come under repeated attack from the Taleban. Hezb-e-Wahdat and the Taleban are also holding talks on a peaceful handover of Bamiyan.

Meanwhile, a pro-Taleban uprising has swept northeastern Takhar province one of the few areas still outside the control of the Islamic militia, Taleban radio said Tuesday.

Several commanders of Mr. Rabbani have been arrested by locals in Takhar and others were on the run, Radio Shariat said.

"Takhar people have risen in our support and Taleban flags are flying in the area," the radio said, without indicating when the Islamic militia, now consolidating its grip on the northern region, would move into Takhar.

However, there was no independent confirmation of the report.

The fate of neighbouring Badakshan province remained unclear as the Islamic militia have vowed to complete their sweep in the region bordering the Central Asian republics.

Meanwhile, negotiations between the Shiite Hezb-e-Wahdat faction for the peaceful handover of the central Bamiyan province were continuing, Afghan sources in Pakistan said.

No military activity was reported on the frontlines near the province, a stronghold of the opposition Hezb-e-Wahdat representing Afghanistan's Shiite minority.

Islamic militia authorities have asked the Shiite faction to send negotiators to Kabul to reach a peaceful solution, the sources added.

U.S. urges restoration of Sierra Leone leader

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States called on coup leaders Monday to restore the ousted civilian Sierra Leone government and said it was holding them responsible for the safety of American and other foreign residents.

It urged "those claiming power in freetown," capital of the west African state, "to return power promptly to the country's elected leadership and parliament."

"The United States condemns the coup which overthrew Sierra Leone's first democratically elected government in three decades," the State Department added in a statement.

After toppling President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's government Sunday, the coup leaders announced the formation of an Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Maj. Johnny Paul Koromah. They said they wanted to bring rebels of the Revolutionary United Front into the government to consolidate an elusive peace in the country's six-year civil war.

The United States said it was holding the council, "at present in control of the security situation," responsible for the safety and well-being of all foreign residents.

It deplored what it called extensive looting of relief food as well as the property of Sierra Leonean and foreign residents.

"The pillage greatly reduces the availability of assistance that was being provided to the people of Sierra Leone," acting spokesman John Dinger said in the statement.

He added that the looting would have a direct bearing on "the willingness and ability of the international community" to bankroll recovery from the civil war.

Maj. Koromah said he overthrew Mr. Kabbah, who flew into exile in Guinea, because his government, elected last year after four years of military rule, failed to consolidate peace and the political situation had encouraged tribal conflict.

The State Department warned U.S. citizens to defer all travel to Sierra Leone, calling the situation there "extremely dangerous."

The soldiers who have seized power appear increasingly isolated at home and abroad amid talk in the capital of a possible countercoup.

Residents of the capital Freetown Monday ignored orders to get back to work. Shops and businesses, largely looted in Sunday's coup, remained closed along with market places.

Parents kept their children away from school, but high school students taking final year examinations ventured to exam centres with the assistance of soldiers.

In neighbouring Liberia, the west African peacekeeping force (ECOMOG) sealed the land border with Sierra Leone and its naval units mounted coastal patrols. The deployments fuelled speculation that the Nigerian-led force was about to intervene in Sierra Leone where its troops were drawn into coup battles.

ECOMOG Deputy Force Commander Brigadier-General Joe Kwateng told reporters in Monrovia that peacekeeping soldiers deployed in Liberia's western Grand Cape Mount country had been ordered to seal the Sierra Leone border.

"As part of the operation, soldiers of ECOMOG's navy battalion are continuing their patrol of international waters and have also stepped up border patrols," Gen. Kwateng said.

Port officials and military sources in Monrovia said two naval boats left with hundreds of battle-ready peacekeeping troops Sunday night, presumably heading for Sierra Leone.

Heavily armed Nigerian troops accompanied by tactical vehicles boarded the navy vessels, they said.

South Africa joined the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in condemning Sunday's coup, which put an end to just over a year of civilian rule.

"This is an unpopular coup because we don't want military rule in Sierra Leone anymore and we as lawyers consider it unacceptable," a prominent Freetown lawyer said.

Freetown residents said the new Armed Forces Revolutionary Council appeared to lack the full backing of the army and the success of the coup had depended on support from prisoners freed from jail early Sunday.

Sri Lanka troops said advancing in rebel territory

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan troops were reported advancing deeper into northern rebel-held territory Tuesday after being slowed earlier by counter-attacks by Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

Military officials in the north said the army shelled rebel-held areas northeast of Omanthai Monday and began moving out of Rambaikulam, which was captured after fierce weekend fighting against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

"There was some fighting overnight. They (troops) are advancing," one military official said.

A military spokesman in Colombo declined to confirm the advance, saying he was still waiting for details.

He said troops consolidated their positions in the freshly captured northern areas Monday, building fortifications and organising supplies.

Troops resumed their drive into the rebel heartland at the weekend after a five-day pause but were slowed by fierce resistance from the rebels. Several soldiers and rebels were killed in the clash.

The defence ministry said troops had moved three kilometres north of Omanthai to Rambaikulam over the weekend. Security forces last week captured Omanthai, 14 kilometres north of the government-held town of Vavuniya, and Nedunkeni, 25 kilometres northeast of Vavuniya, after a two-pronged thrust into the LTTE's northern Wanni heartland. Vavuniya lies 220 kilometres north of the capital Colombo.

The defence ministry said 14 soldiers were killed and 19 wounded in the fighting at Rambaikulam. No casualties were reported Monday.

Casualty figures released by the defence ministry showed 89 soldiers had died in the 14-day old offensive, one of the military's biggest in the 13-year-old ethnic war. About 145 soldiers were wounded.

Hospital sources said about 600 soldiers were wounded.

The government says more than 50,000 people have been killed in the war, but the LTTE say the toll is higher.

Some 20,000 troops launched "Operation Jaya Sikuru" — "Sure Of Victory" — from Vavuniya on May 13 in a bid to open a supply route to the Jaffna peninsula, 100 kilometres further north.

Government forces rely on air and sea links to supply bases and civilians in Jaffna.

CIS states discuss Afghan frontier security

MOSCOW (R) — Representatives of Russia and eight other former Soviet Republics met in Moscow Tuesday to debate whether to set in motion their mutual defence mechanism following gains by the Taleban militia in Afghanistan.

A spokesman for the collective Security Council told Reuters the meeting of the executive body had been scheduled earlier but that events in Afghanistan had taken over the agenda.

The main question, he said, was whether to convene an urgent meeting of deputy defence ministers — the first step to activating the 1992 collective security treaty, which obliges members to defend any signatory from an external aggressor.

The sudden collapse of opposition to the Islamists, allowing the Taleban to sweep close to the old Soviet frontier, sparked alarm in Moscow at the spread of fundamentalist Islam and fears that a wave of refugees and defeated fighters could destabilise countries like Tajikistan in formerly Soviet Central Asia.

Four of the five former Soviet states in Central Asia — Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan — are signatories with Russia of the treaty, which came into force in 1994. Turkmenistan is not a member. Belarus and the Caucasus states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are signatories.

The treaty operates under the aegis of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which groups 12 of the 15 former republics of the Soviet Union.

Russia, whose own nearest border is nearly 1,000 kilometres from Afghanistan, already has some 20,000 troops and Border Guards deployed in Tajikistan, where a fragile peace is holding after four years of civil war.

Those forces and the troops of some Central Asian states near the mountainous Afghan frontier have been placed on alert following the rapid Taleban advance at the weekend.

Moscow withdrew its troops from Afghanistan in 1989 following a 10-year intervention in the country that cost the lives of 13,000 Soviet soldiers, by official accounts.

Student exiles demand Burma honours 1990 polls

BANGKOK (R) — A group of exiled Burmese students protested in front of Rangoon's embassy in Bangkok Tuesday to demand that an opposition party's landslide victory in 1990 elections be recognised by the Rangoon military junta.

The students, joined by some Thai counterparts, carried placards and posters at a peaceful protest outside the embassy to mark the seventh anniversary of the polls.

Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party easily won the election but the Ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) refused to honour the result.

"In commemoration of the seventh anniversary of the NLD's election victory, we, the democracy-loving Thai and Burmese students, strongly condemn the SLORC rulers for their suppression of political freedom and violations of human rights in Burma," a joint statement by the students said.

"We urge the SLORC to honour the promise made to the Burmese people by allowing the NLD, the party that has won the election, to form the government and then transfer power to a democratically-elected government," it added.

Hundreds of Burmese dissidents fled to Thailand after the military crushed pro-democracy street protests in Rangoon in September 1988.

Some were repatriated by Thai authorities to Burma in early 1990 but many others still remain in Thailand.

In Rangoon Tuesday, a small group of NLD members held a gathering at Ms. Suu Kyi's home to mark the election anniversary. The SLORC, using armed riot police, cut off access to Ms. Suu Kyi's lakeside home at University Avenue and other possible locations for the planned National League for Democracy Party (NLD) gathering.

Only 10 Executive Committee members of the party were allowed into Ms. Suu Kyi's house for a meeting, a senior NLD source told Reuters by telephone from her home.

The NLD had planned to hold a gathering of several hundred party members and elected parliamentarians at Ms. Suu Kyi's house to mark the anniversary.

The NLD source also said the SLORC had detained up to 316 party members nationwide since last week, including about 50 members of parliament, to thwart the planned special gathering.

A government spokesman said the NLD had not sought permission to hold such a large gathering. "If they hold such a meeting at Ms. Suu Kyi's house, they will be stopped. Only the party's Executive Committee members, family members and those living there can go in," he told Reuters.

The SLORC also denied NLD charges that it had detained party members and asked the NLD to prove its allegation.

Witnesses said that security had been tightened with roadblocks near Ms. Suu Kyi's home and stringent checks made on those going to visit her.

Some NLD members were stopped from entering Suu Kyi's house and police were also stationed near the home of another senior party leader U Tin Oo and the party's Rangoon head office.

But the NLD source said that most discussions for the party's planned special gathering had already been completed on May 26 by party members who managed to meet in Rangoon.

"Technically, the meeting on the occasion of the seventh anniversary was completed successfully and we will continue with our struggle for democracy until we reach the goal even though the SLORC tries all means to stop us," the source said.

He added that a total of up to 500 party members had gathered in different groups last week to discuss party reports on the economy, political situation, justice and other matters.

Analysts said the latest development was expected and represented a face-saving measure for both sides.

A diplomat stationed in Rangoon said: "The SLORC action was firm but they used kid gloves to stop this meeting from going ahead to minimise any fallout."

The U.S. embassy's charge d'affaires, Kent Weideman, said he had lodged a protest with the government over its reported detention of NLD members and attempts to stop opposition political activities.

"The government is trying to keep things as quiet as possible and not let these kind of events go forward so as not to reveal the true extent of popular dissatisfaction," he said.

He said the SLORC's calculated action to curb the gathering was intended to make things appear normal in the run-up to a decision on whether Burma may join the seven-member Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year.

ASEAN, which groups Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Brunei and Vietnam, is to decide later this year on whether or not to admit Burma as a member.

"Any large number of people on streets or even in Suu Kyi's compound would tarnish their image and perhaps negatively affect their clear proven wish to get into ASEAN," Mr. Weideman said.

Indonesia's Golkar expects election win

JAKARTA (R) — Nearly 125 million Indonesians are eligible to vote Thursday in general elections which the Golkar Party is set to win comfortably after 30 years in power.

But the Muslim-oriented United Development Party (PPP) poses a surprisingly strong challenge to Golkar during a 27-day campaign that saw some of the worst political violence over the past three decades. Golkar has set a target of 70.02 per cent of the vote compared to the 68 per cent it won in the last elections in 1992.

The PPP won 17 per cent in 1992 and the Christian-Nationalist Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) — now badly split in a leadership battle — 15 per cent.

Hundreds of thousands of PPP supporters took to the streets in Jakarta and other areas during the campaign in what some political analysts said was a spontaneous explosion of partisanship and youthful exuberance, but also frustration with a system that allows political demonstrations for only a month every five years. "I haven't seen such intense anger, jealousy and frustration before," political commentator Mochtar Buchori told Reuters Tuesday.

He said the PPP leadership was likely to accept the outcome of the election, with Golkar pushing for a higher percentage of the vote. But he and other analysts questioned whether grass-roots members of the PPP would be so accommodating if they felt the result was blatantly unfair.

Financial markets have so far shrugged off the violence that culminated in a riot and fire in which up to 142 people were reported to have died in the South Kalimantan capital of Banjarmasin on the last day of campaigning last Friday.

Analysts said key issues included the percentages gained by the three parties, the reaction of the PPP and the size of the so-called Golput, or white party — a reference to people who spoil their ballots or abstain.

Golkar officials put the size of Golput at between three and four per cent in the 1992 election in which about 90 per cent of the electorate cast their ballots.

The government-run Electoral Commission imposed a five-day cooling off period between the end of the campaign and the actual voting, and there have been no reports of fresh trouble.

Thursday's vote is for 425 elected seats in the House of Representatives. The other 75 are filled by the military which does not vote.

Polls open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. (0100-0700 GMT), a remarkably short period in the world's fourth-most populous nation of 200 million people. "Voting is very localised with a lot of polling booths," commented one analyst.

Major results are expected within 24 hours.

The election Indonesians are eyeing, however, is a presidential poll in March next year in which President Suharto, 75, is widely expected to seek a seventh five-year term in office.

The 500 members of the house of representatives and 500 appointed members make up the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) which meets every five years to elect the president and vice-president and approve guidelines for government policy.

Indonesians are looking ahead to the MPR session for a glimpse of the future, with Mr. Suharto's choice for running mate a potential successor.

Clinton says U.S. must meet its responsibilities

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Monday led a Memorial Day tribute to the nation's war dead and warned that America must meet its responsibilities in order to avoid mistakes that led to past wars.

Using the backdrop of long rows of white tombstones that fill acres of land at Arlington National Cemetery in suburban Virginia, Mr. Clinton set the stage for his trip to Europe this week — designed to deal with a post-Cold War Europe.

"If you look at all the gravestones here today, you will see that they have not died in vain," he told some 5,000 gathered at the military cemetery.

"When you see what we enjoy today, and that we stand at the pinnacle of our power, our success and our influence as a nation, but that means that we stand at the pinnacle of our responsibility," he said.

He invoked the memory of George Marshall, the former army general and secretary of state who devised a U.S. plan to rebuild much of Western Europe following the devastation of World War II.

"We must learn the lessons General Marshall and his generation left U.S.," Mr. Clinton declared. "Their sacrifice and their spirit call upon us to seize this moment, to shape the peace of the present for future generations, to turn the hope we share into a history we can all be proud of.

"At the end of World War II, General Marshall could make that case to America," Mr. Clinton said. "We fought a bloody war because we did not assume that responsibility at the end of World War I."

He said Americans must ask themselves "how can we make sure that we have a new century in which we do not repeat the mistakes of the last one."

"I will say the only way that can happen is that if America refuses to walk away from the world and its present challenges," Mr. Clinton said.

Mr. Clinton departed for Paris Monday evening, where today he and other NATO leaders signed a landmark agreement with Russia designed to recognise security interests in the post-Cold War era and set the stage for the alliance's expansion into former Communist Europe.

He visits the Netherlands Wednesday to mark the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan, and Thursday meets new British Prime Minister Tony Blair in London for talks.

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U.S. holds the key

ON THE eve of his first visit to Israel the British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Derek Fatchett made the position of the Labour government clear during a visit to Cairo on Monday. "We regard the (Israeli) settlements as illegal and a clear impediment for the progress in the peace process," Mr. Fatchett said.

This crystal clear position reminds us of the old U.S. stance which equally opposed the Israeli settlement plans on Palestinian land and termed it as illegal. In retrospect, it is the erosion of this U.S. posture on the Jewish housing schemes in the occupied territories that led to the current stand-off between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority. There is no doubt that had Washington kept to its original position on the settlement issue, Israel would not have continued its campaign to colonise Palestinian lands in an open defiance of every U.N. resolution.

Many Arab and non-Arab parties are desperately trying now to find a solution to the crisis brought by the Israeli settlement policies in order to advance the peace talks. The European Union (EU) has joined the efforts for this purpose so did the Arab World. His Majesty King Hussein's talks with President Hosni Mubarak in Aqaba Saturday and Mr. Mubarak's summit with Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu at Sharm Al Sheikh Tuesday have both targeted the settlement issue as the single most important impediment to peace in the area. All these efforts would not have been necessary had Washington remained faithful to its previous principled position that called the settlements illegal.

All the Clinton administration needs to do now to rescue the peace process from imminent and permanent derailment and lend support to all the efforts to end the deadlock in the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians is to become once again faithful to its original policy. The entire international community is united on this issue except for the U.S. The Americans realise that Mr. Netanyahu's policies are designed to predetermine the fate of the occupied territories. The Palestinians and everybody else know this for a fact. That is why the Palestinians refuse to go back to the negotiating table unless Israel froze the settlements, especially the one currently being built on Jabal Abu Ghneim. The Palestinians argue, and rightly so, that if the Israeli policies of colonising the West Bank continued there is nothing much to negotiate about. The Americans realise this. They are the ones who advocated the formula of "land-for-peace" and started it in Madrid in 1991.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE ELECTION, in Iran, of a moderate man who supports change in the country's general policies reflects the Iranian people's desire for change, but it remains to be seen whether this election will help the Iranians achieve their aspirations, said Mufid Nahleh, a writer for Al Ra'i daily. Given the fact that Mohammad Khatemi, the president elect, has many opponents in parliament and due to the presence of prominent political leaders who oppose change in Iran's domestic and foreign policies, the new president is bound to meet with stiff resistance to his moderate stand, said the writer. Mr. Khatemi's election reflects the Iranian people's desire to see an end to their country's isolation in the region and in the world at large, resulting from policies adopted by Tehran since the revolution, according to the writer. He said that the president elect is expected by the voters to take measures to change the country's policies towards its neighbours and the West, but this is a very hard task and he is expected to meet with resistance from many circles. The writer said the most difficult task which Mr. Khatemi will be facing is that represented by the Majles (Iran's parliament) which houses the main opponents of change.

A WRITER for Al Dustour described agents in the pay of the Jewish state, who arrange for the sale of Palestinian lands to Israel, as traitors who deserve the death penalty because they sell their country to its enemies. Oreib Rintawi said that the Palestinians have not yet signed a peace treaty with Israel and they have all the right to protect their land and to punish those who steal it for the enemy. By imposing the death penalty on the traitors, the Palestine Authority is only applying the Jordanian laws which are still in force in the West Bank and which imposed the same penalty on the traitors, the writer pointed out. By exercising their rights, the Palestinians are not committing a crime, as Israel and the United States are now trying to claim worldwide, also trying to instigate other nations against the Palestinians, said the writer. While Israel is claiming that the Palestine Authority's rule against the sale of land to Israel constitutes a human rights violation, it bans any land sale to the Arabs and forget its daily violation of the human rights of the Palestinians.

Washington Watch

By Dr. James J. Zogby

O.J. Simpson's story is about 'what the commercial culture could create and exploit'

THREE YEARS after the grotesque murder of his ex-wife and a friend, the O.J. Simpson business is still booming.

From the very outset, the O.J. Simpson story was an American business saga. It was made by money and it was about money.

O.J. Simpson was a creation of the U.S. commercial culture. Like so many other athletes, he was transformed by this culture into a commodity to be sold and, in turn, to be used to sell products to others.

The O.J. Simpson that the public came to know was the kind, soft-spoken, witty O.J. While it had been his athletic prowess that brought him into the public eye, the media created an image of O.J. that sustained him and continued to generate millions in commercial resources.

The murder of his ex-wife threatened to bring about the collapse of the O.J. Simpson enterprise. Despite being acquitted in the criminal trial, Simpson emerged a damaged product. Most Americans (predominately white Americans) believed that he had killed his wife and the friend and was only found not guilty because his highly-paid team of lawyers confounded the prosecution and shredded their case against Simpson.

American justice allowed the families of the murdered victims another trial. This was a civil trial where the families could sue Simpson for the damage and suffering they believe he caused. Because this type of trial operates by different rules, it allowed the families to introduce evidence and information that was not allowed in the criminal proceeding. In this case, the families succeeded and a jury found Simpson guilty and ordered him to pay $33.5 million in damages to the families of his ex-wife and her friend, Ron Goldman.

Simpson's attorneys have argued that their client's career is in ruins and he cannot pay that amount of money. Last week, an appeals court ruled against Simpson and ordered him to pay the damages.

While one could hope that the appeals court's decision would bring an end to this three-year-old sordid saga, the O.J. story remains alive and well. O.J. may be damaged, with his carefully crafted media image in tatters. But the O.J. business did not collapse. O.J. has become a money-making machine for others who exploit their involvement in his case.

In the beginning, this was about O.J., the star, who sold products and made money for himself and for those whose products he sold. The O.J. enterprise has now been transformed into O.J., the fallen star, whose story is making money for those who exploit his demise.

O.J. was a creature of television. This medium made him and it exploited its creation well. So it should be no surprise that television extensively exploited the story of his demise during the past three years.

One recent study shows that three major television network half-hour news programmes have devoted over 3,000 minutes of precious news time to the O.J. case during the past three years. NBC-TV "Nightly News," for example, featured the O.J. case as its lead story 73 times during this period.

Two smaller networks, (CNN and Court TV) carried the entire O.J. trial live every day.

The U.S. media's fixation with its own creation reached its most absurd level last January when the verdict was announced in the O.J. civil trial. The jury rendered its verdict just as the president of the United States was about to deliver the State of the Union message to U.S. Congress and the public.

While all the major networks decided to run the president's address (although some of the minor networks did not), they did so apologetically. And when the verdict came, all of the networks flashed the verdict across the television screen while the president was speaking.

The nation's print media did much the same. The day after the State of Union/O.J. verdict, both the New York Times and the Washington Post gave greater prominence to the O.J. story then they did to the president's address.

The U.S.' leading news weekly magazines (Times, Newsweek, etc.) featured O.J. as their cover story more than twenty times. And the nation's leading tabloid featured the case on their front page 88 times!

The result of this excessive media fixation on the case was that the public, even those who, at first, were not interested in O.J. or his sordid life, were drawn into its web. In the beginning, O.J. business was the media-created image of O.J. and its ability to sell products; now it has become the case itself, and its ability to make money.

O.J.'s own career may be over as a result of the ugly double murders of which he stands accused, but his case has created new careers for others.

Simpson's lead defence attorney now has his own television show as does the lead prosecuting attorney. Both lawyers and others associated with the case also make tens of thousands of dollars per appearance on the lecture circuit.

All told, about twenty individuals (lawyers, witnesses and friends) have become wealthy due to their proximity to the case. And across the U.S., dozens of other lawyers and television commentators have also been able to exploit the case as analysts on television and radio or as hosts of shows that focused on discussing the O.J. case.

Another important product coming out of this O.J. enterprise has been a virtual library of books. Over forty books have already been published about the case — the first one was in stores less than two weeks after the murder. Nineteen of these books have even made it on the New York Times "best sellers" list. Even O.J. Simpson himself has sought to exploit his notoriety. In the early stages of the trial, O.J. released a book recounting his side of the story and immediately following his acquittal in the criminal proceedings, released a video attesting to his innocence.

This week, three years after the murder, books are still on the list and there are more best-sellers to come. O.J.'s prosecutor, Marcia Clark, signed a book contract earlier this year for $4.2 million. And O.J.'s last girlfriend has received $3 million to write her book.

To understand how big this O.J. business has become, I should mention that George Bush only received $1 million to write his memoirs.

And so it goes on; the O.J. business is still booming. From the beginning, it was a story about what the commercial culture could create and exploit — and it still is.

Remembering Cana or how the media manipulate rational judgement

By Dr. A. Clare Brandabur

ONE YEAR ago, on April 18, as part of "Grapes of Wrath," the Israelis directed a precision artillery barrage at a U.N. position manned by Fijian peacekeepers in Cana, South Lebanon. {Christians know Cana as the setting for Jesus' first miracle: here he turned water into wine (John 2:1-11)}.

During the intense bombardment, dozens of families who had sought safety at the U.N. post were incinerated together with their makeshift shelters. The Israelis were using the U.S.-built targeting system, the YQP-37 Firefinder designed for accuracy. In addition, two Israeli helicopters and a remote-piloted intelligence-gathering drone flew overhead. Over one hundred people were blown apart, burned, decapitated, disembowelled.

I do not want to dwell on what actually happened — this has been carefully documented; the Independent, on April 21 and May 19, 1996, carried a detailed account, both sensitive and intelligent, by Robert Fisk. A follow-up article by David Osborne stated that the U.N. report on the slaughter concluded that Israel deliberately targeted the U.N. base intending to cause the greatest number of casualties Independent, May 4, 1996). There was also a largely overlooked article in the Guardian Weekly (May 26, 1996), by Shyam Bhatia writing from Amman, which suggests a more sinister factor in the Cana massacre.

The subject here is rather the way this event was covered by the mainstream American weekly, Newsweek. Here is an intriguing clue to the vexing mystery of the naiveté of the American public, since it provides an example of the way Middle Eastern issues are prejudged and packaged in loaded rhetorical symbols for the American consumer.

The cover of the issue reproduces a photo credited to Ramzi Haidar, from the AFP, showing a grieving man "after the Israeli attack on Nabatiyeh." The man had lost his entire family, though the reader does not learn this fact from the Newsweek — he only figures in a brief reference in the context of an explanation of Israeli damage control on page 15 in Tom Masland's cover story: "A bomb or missile hit a house in the village of Nabatiyeh Al Fawqa, reportedly killing 11 people, including an infant and several children."

However, Robert Fisk's article in The Independent prints a photo of the same man and identifies the infant referred to in the Newsweek as the grieving father's new-born baby, killed along with her mother and all their older children.

In the Newsweek, none of the victims is named. In Robert Fisk's account, he notes that one survivor asks him to record the names of those killed; honouring this request, Fisk meticulously lists the names of the dead, identifying them by family relationship and age.

On the Newsweek cover, to be left of the figure of the grieving man, is a Biblical passage, "go up to Lebanon and cry." Jeremiah 22:20. This passage is a text from the Old Testament which, in this context, has the effect of suggesting the inevitability of suffering and reinforces the sense of the righteous indignation of God, evoked by the Israeli designation of their assault on Lebanon as "Grapes of Wrath."

However, in its original context, this Biblical text is addressed to the followers of a Jewish king, Jehoiakim, who are being told to "cry out" in the sense of expressing indignation. The old Jewish prophet, Jeremiah, is calling down hellfire and brimstone, not on the Lebanese, but on a Jewish King who has violated Yahweh's injunctions and is therefore disgraced: he will be buried "with the burial of an ass... dragged and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem. Go up to Lebanon and cry out." (Jeremiah 22:19-20).

So the designers of the Newsweek cover have changed the Biblical text: "Go up to Lebanon and cry" suggests passive lamentation, while "Go up to Lebanon and cry out" suggests righteous indignation.

Even greater irony appears at the top of the page: in a banner headline above the Newsweek logo appears the following: "Collective Guilt? Americans, Germans and the Holocaust"

How fortuitous that, in this issue of Newsweek, containing all kinds of major stories, the editors chose to highlight a review of a new book about the Holocaust, giving it such pre-eminence that it shares the cover with the Cana massacre!

In case the American reader might question the ethics of Israel's murder of civilians in Lebanon, Newsweek's editors found it necessary to surround the photograph of the bereaved father with not so subtle reminders of his own guilt for the suffering of the Jews in the Holocaust by juxtaposing key words like "Collective Guilt" and "Holocaust" and a quotation from the Jewish scriptures, like protective coating.

Inside the Newsweek, the lead story on Cana is by Tom Masland (page 10). The main headline is "In the Crossfire," suggesting that these civilians have been killed inadvertently, when they were unfortunately the accidental victims of a more or less equal fight. "Accidental" is the operative word: the Newsweek will make sure the reader does not arrive at the idea that Israel might deliberately have targeted civilians, so the next headline helps the reporter to make the right judgement: "Will the accidental killing of 100 Lebanese civilians cost Peres the election, and kill any chance for peace?"

So the American reader finds any possible moral indignation deflected from its logical target, Israel — and by extension his own government which provides Israel with billions of tax dollars, state-of-the-art military technology and unquestioning moral support. The readre is comfortingly assured that the massacre was "accidental", at best a rush to judgement since the results of the U.N. investigation were not yet available, and then his malleable attention is directed instead to the question of Peres' — (at the time "our man" to succeed Rabin) — chances of election and, naturally, since America loves peace, whether the peace process will have been damaged. It would not be seemly for the U.S. taxpayer to dwell too long on the scenes of carnage without having his moral judgement made for him and his attention directed to real U.S. interests.

To give Tom Masland credit, he tries to suggest in the body of the report something of the horror of the mass slaughter. But the photos show only blanket-covered bodies, and the second and third pages of the piece feature prominently across the lower fourth of the pages a brief and highly selective history of conflict on the Lebanon/Israeli border, headed "Tit for Tat on the Border," which suggests an equal contest.

In the pages that follow, space given to the Cana story is almost equalled by discussion of the book on the Holocaust advertised on the cover, "Hitler's Willing Executioners" by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen; followed by an opinion page 25 with a photo of swastikas on baby carriages in which anti-Semitism, American and German guilt are once more rehearsed.

But there is more to the Cana story. No one else, to my knowledge, picked up on the article in the Guardian Weekly, with Shyam Bhatia's by-line; he is now reporter for the British Observer in Jerusalem. Under a headline that reads: "Death squad targets Hizbollah", Bhatia reports that members of an Israeli death squad called "Egoz," (Hebrew for almond), were indirectly responsible for triggering the massacre at the U.N. base in Cana. Egoz was sent to pinpoint Hizbollah men firing Katyusha rockets into Israel, he says. "On April 18 Israeli commandos in civilian clothes arrived in Cana to search for Hizbollah militants but, fearing they had been detected, they radioed home for help. Army commanders told them to withdraw before ordering artillery to shell the area."

According to this article, "Western intelligence experts say Egoz owes its existence to the former army chief of staff Ehud Barak, now foreign minister, who led a hit squad that assassinated Palestine Liberation Organisation leaders in Beirut more than 20 years ago."

Shyam Bhatia documents the activities of another secret squad, Unit 504 which, he says, is active in several neighbouring countries. Indeed, the activities of these secret "crack undercover units" have been appearing prominently over the past few weeks. It was one such unit called "Duvdevan" or "Cherry" (Jordan Times, Feb. 27, 1997) which attacked a house in the village of Hizmeh, just north of Jerusalem, on Feb. 25. According to Israeli TV, the activities of this "crack unit" resulted in the death of a 55-year-old man who tried to intervene as they tortured a young man. Dressed like Arabs, these armed Israeli soldiers more recently shot a Palestinian driver on the main road inside Jerusalem and some distance from the Hizmeh roadblock on April 30.

Such undercover activity is not new. The documents of the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre (PHRIC), in a special issue on undercover killings (Jan. 29, 1992), state that since the Madrid peace conference many of the deaths of Palestinians recorded by this human rights monitoring group were carried out by special Israeli undercover units "in circumstances which are in clear violation of basic human rights." From August 1989, when these undercover units were established, until the Jan. 29, 1992 report, a total of 66 killings were documented by PHRIC.

This is merely a small sample of the documentation of these death squads. Yet they are never mentioned in main-stream American media and U.S. officials, including President Bill Clinton, speak of Israel as a democracy and consistently refuse to recognise the operation of death squads, the continued land confiscation, the torture in prisons, as well as the collective punishments such as closure of borders and demolition of houses.

Of course the role played by Israeli death squads in Cana and, more generally, in Lebanon (Shyam Bhatia says they are estimated by Western intelligence sources to have killed about 50 Hizbollah fighters in hand-to-hand combat) was not included in the Newsweek report. Nevertheless, the Newsweek coverage of Cana can provide a useful example of the strategy by which, almost unconsciously, the Biblical archetypes and the moral authority of religion are manipulated to paralyse rational judgement. Readers should recognise and use all possible means to counter this strategy of disinformation.

The writer is on the teaching staff of the English Department at Isra University. She contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

IT OCCURRED TO ME

Much ado about press

By Ali Kassay

A NUMBER of my seniors and contemporaries urged me during the past week to devote this article to the new press and publications law, something which I had been inclined to leave alone, partly because the subject does not lend itself to parody. The other reason for my reluctance is that I take with a grain of salt the point of view that the new law is a watershed in Jordan's journalistic history and process of democratisation.

The reason why I hold this opinion is that the performance of the press and its contribution to the process of democratisation in Jordan was not all that impressive to start with. Therefore, whatever freedoms or limitations the new law introduces can only be equally marginal.

For instance, most of the numerous publications that flooded the Jordanian market were little more than rags which specialised in writing stories about Djin raping women and stories about international prostitution rings, all in an attempt to attract readership by inserting as much feminine flesh as the code of decency permits. Other, more politicised weeklies, have permitted themselves to publish falsehoods that could have been proven to be such with the minimum of research. One possible explanation is that journalists allowed their personal persuasions and sympathies to get the better of their journalistic integrity by printing news without adequate research to establish the veracity of their information.

As for the respectable press, they have largely weseinded any pretence of serious journalism and concentrated instead on the lucrative business of publishing advertisements and obituaries, surrounded by an awful lot or paper and print, thinly disguised as news.

As a matter of fact, successive ministers of information were astounded by the resistance of journalists to the liberalisation of their profession. On one occasion, for instance, a minister of information was constantly harangued by journalists to ban a certain local television programme, to the point where he commissioned an opinion poll which showed that the majority of the population found the programme not only innocuous, but acceptable and even healthy.

You see, most journalists realise that they can survive in this profession only in the context of its present state of mediocrity, or even insignificance, and they do not want the door open to any improvement of its standards.

Consequently, all the government's attempts to encourage the creation of a voluntary ethics and standards supervisory body from within the profession fell on deaf ears.

Jordanians who show talent and ability in journalism, as in most other professions, have to work outside the country, or at least outside the Jordanian press, in order to fulfil their potential.

Now it is one thing to say that nonsense has the right to be nonsense, and the right to exist as such. That is an argument which merits debate. My point, however, is that we must not succumb to the specious argument that a large volume of nonsense will contribute effectively to the promotion of democracy in Jordan or anywhere. As a matter of fact, the most serious criticism that I have heard from journalists of the new press law is that it will restore the monopoly on advertising to certain newspapers, which will allow them to raise the fees that they charge for publishing obituaries.

What price motherhood now?

'Nature turned into a commodity'

By Melanie Phillips

THE AIR is suddenly thick with the sound of foetuses coming home to haunt the roost. A Dutch couple, Clemens and Sonja Peters, paid £12,000 "expenses" to surrogate mother Karen Roche to be artificially inseminated with Mr. Peters' sperm and bear his child for them.

A gothic tragedy then unravelled. Mrs. Roche first announced she had aborted the child in disgust at what she had done, and then declared she was still pregnant and would bring the child up as her own.

Meanwhile, in another part of the tangled fertility forest, a lesbian couple, Dawn and Lisa, shot to public notoriety. Dawn is four months pregnant, having inseminated herself with sperm from a friend to provide a sibling for Lisa's six-month old daughter, who was conceived from sperm donated into a sterilised pickle jar.

Our society, which feels it can pass no judgement on the way these children were conceived, is roused from its moral torpor only when it comes to paying for them. Thus, the Child Support Agency lumbered into action, pursuing one father in a pickle jar and another in a hypodermic syringe for recompense.

What both cases have in common is an extreme reductionism of human identity, in which children are no more than the product of randomly assembled parts and fathers a mechanically recovered emission of bodily fluids.

Both dismember procreation into its component parts of sex, conception and pregnancy. Both mean a child is conceived in the absence of a loving, or indeed any emotional, human engagement.

Both turn the child into a commodity, an object to be created or destroyed as a mere instrument of adult happiness. And both have demonstrated once again the way advances in medical technology expose our current moral confusion.

Of course, one cannot fail to sympathise with the plight of the Dutch couple, driven to rent Mrs. Roche's womb by the desolation of childlessness. Their tragedy has now been hideously compounded by this appalling mess.

But compassion alone cannot motivate public policy, especially where the risks of doing harm to others are so pronounced. Surrogacy is intensely undesirable and should be actively discouraged. Sometimes it can produce great joy, as we saw recently with the triplets borne by a surrogate on behalf of their ecstatic genetic parents.

But such intended happiness all too often goes disastrously wrong and does terrible harm. There may be conflicts over ownership of the child, as in the case of the Peters family. The intended parents may reject the child because it is handicapped, or they change their minds.

Even where the baby is handed over without argument, the surrogate mother is often left deeply depressed, which is hardly surprising. The biological bond formed in pregnancy between the mother and the unborn child is intense and important, however loudly the surrogate may deny it.

No wonder Mrs. Roche found she couldn't go through with the abortion. Women are not human warehouses. To treat them as such not only degrades them as women but hits them at a profound level in their psyche.

And then there are the interests of the child, the last person to be considered in these situations. If the Peters family kept the child, it would have been rejected by its biological mother and brought up by its natural father and stepmother.

If Mrs. Roche kept it, it would be deprived of its natural father who, in any case, played no other role in its conception than inserting a syringe into its mother, who was "shocked and stunned" by the whole process — for which she was paid. To classify the £12,00 as "expenses" is a transparent fiction.

What would any of that do to a child's all-important sense of identity? Given these damaging personal and social consequences, how can surrogacy be permitted, paid or not?

The dismemberment of procreation corrupts the essence of family. It is true that adopted children usually manage to overcome these problems of identity, but they still have them. The point is that artificial insemination wilfully creates them.

A child is properly the outcome of close and loving human contact between the people who created it. Whenever that is interrupted, the child treats it as a rejection by one or both parents, leading to potentially deep problems with identity and self-worth.

This applies to any kind of artificial insemination by donor. The pickle jar pregnancy is but one point on a continuum, from AID through in-vitro fertilisation to surrogacy. The issue is not whether lesbians are able to care properly for children — they are as able or unable as anyone else — but rather that the "right" to have a child has blinded us to the dereliction of duty to act in the most fundamental interests of that child.

There is surely no "right" to a child. Fertility is a stroke of good fortune. Infertility is a grievous affliction; but treating children as commodities is worse for them and for all of us.

The Observer

'Eugenics masquerading as moralism'

By Bea Campbell

ONE OF the things that we know about ourselves is that we will go to almost any lengths to have — or not to have — babies. People have been making babies, killing babies, swapping and stealing them, begging for or borrowing them for ever.

It's human nature. Birth and death, giving and taking life — the object of amazing effort and anxiety — are universal, and universally ordered by ritual and religion, law and love. Never more than in secular societies that are expanding the freedom to choose when, whether, how and with whom to be a parent. But freedom brings no less scrutiny, scandal and struggle to police those choices.

The recent "scandals" — a surrogate mother who says she is keeping the baby, and two lesbians who may be chased by the Child Support Agency after impregnating themselves with donors' sperm — arouse familiar furies. The desire for children is pathologised, as if it is symptomatic of a patriarchy, or a consumer society in which people think they can have what they want — videos, holidays, children, what next?

But this children-as-commodities thesis veils another prejudice, since it does not apply, presumably, when sex is straight and straightforward. As homophobia is increasingly seen for what it is — a phobia — gay men and women's wish to parent children is also seen for what it is — normal.

The surrogacy story broke because the Dutch couple, who were buying the time and labour of a surrogate, weren't paying up. Their mutual mess was all too human. The surrogate mother wanted out. First she said she's had an abortion, then that she hadn't. This warranted outrage and another argument against something unseemly. Moral philosopher Lady Warnock reminded us that surrogacy always worried her. IVF specialist Lord Winston said it should be professionalised. He's probably right, but that won't purge the process of pain and complication. Politicians said commerce should be kept out of it, as if we keep commerce out of anything.

The lesbian story broke when the tabloids picked up an interview in Best magazine on April 23 with two working-class lesbians who explained how they got pregnant, with the help of a pickle jar, a syringe and sperm donors. It's a simple story of human ingenuity and spermatozoic versatility. The devil is in the detail.

"A pickle jar, a plastic syringe. How was it for you?" has written the fastidious and furious Richard Littlejohn in the Daily Mail. His excuse for prosaic queer-bashing was both sex and money: gays have babies on my taxes! He used the pickle jar (better than a milk bottle you might think) to imply a "squalid saga" of sex and scroungers.

But the Best interview revealed a poignant process. Dawn is 29 years old and Lisa is 24, their commitment to each other has been blessed by a vicar, the donors were friends of friends and the women inserted the sperm in a private ceremony together. Dawn cut the umbilical cord when Lisa's baby was born. Dawn is now pregnant herself. Her mother thinks they're great, and the women told Best readers they don't hate men — they just don't like having sex with them.

Prosperous or professional people having babies by donor insemination are beyond statutory scrutiny because they can afford to be. They are beyond the reach of the Child Support Agency's requirement that donor-fathers must contribute to the cost of the children because licensed fertility clinic providing anonymous sperm are exempted.

But Dawn and Lisa could not afford such a clinic. They could, of course, have engaged the men on the Clapham omnibus, or communed with a crowd, to outfox the CSA. But they decided to do the decent thing. They enlisted friendly men who were AIDS-tested but uninvolved.

Benign critics suggest that they shouldn't be bringing children into a world which will plague them with anti-gay prejudices. Would these commentators counsel black people to stay celibate because their children will be victimised by racism? More malign critics invoke the reputation of the participants — as if having a past or peculiar predilections ever inhibited married heterosexual partners from the right to procreate. Lurking behind these anxieties are atavistic alibis that rely on a concept of nature which is unsustainable in the era of science, not to say safe sex.

The notion of "natural" was dealt a death blow long ago when men took medical control over maternity. But medical megalomania and political piety are shadowed by the unruly domestication of desperate measures.

Buried babies and women's grief have been harvested from stony fields in the west of Ireland, the most moral society in these islands, which is being modernised by the discovery of sexual scandals, infanticide and priestly abuse. But secular England seems now to be scandalised by women wanting babies rather than killing them.

These modern would-be-mothers carefully plan sex-free pregnancies only to be insulted by couriers for a new kind of eugenics masquerading as moralism.

The Observer

Scientists use pomegranates to beat viruses

By Jane Pearson

WHEN THE French named the pomegranate "la grenade", they could not have dreamt that it may become a deadly force to combat the onward march of armies of viruses, such as HIV, that can develop into the fatal AIDS condition.

Recent pioneering research carried out in the United Kingdom between the universities of Brighton, Leicester and Nottingham indicates that a substance derived from the pomegranate can "bomb-blast" certain viruses and bacteria with unprecedented efficacy.

At the University of Nottingham, Gordon Stewart, professor in applied molecular biology and head of Applied Science and Food Technology, was involved with Dr. Sabah Jassim on a successful initiative to develop speedier techniques for the identification of salmonella bacteria.

Specifically targeted

The Department of Pharmacy at the University of Brighton was also involved in this research (funded by Glaxo) that relies on the use of bacterial viruses called bacteriophage. These can be specifically targeted at certain bacteria and will behave like antibodies to detect their associated pathogen.

A fundamental element of the salmonella detection research was the provision of a virucide (virus killer) that will destroy bacteriophage without killing the bacterial target — in other words, one that will kill the virus but not the living cells around it. It was the emergence of just such a reagent that led to the discovery that a substance extracted from the pomegranate can kill the HIV virus on contact and also affect some human viruses such as influenza, herpes, polio and diarrhoea.

Dr. Sabah had been exploring a number of plant extracts before following up a reference in the Koran to an orange-size fruit. "It's certainly not the most orthodox way of making a scientific decision," says Professor Stewart, "but it turned out to be true and that's what counts in the end."

The University of Leicester's Muslim representative, Mr. Rashid Siddiqui, added: "Like many other fruits, pomegranates are also mentioned in the Holy Koran as a blessing from the Creator. References to pomegranates are made in Chapter 6, verses 99 and 141 and Chapter 55, verse 68. Characteristically one of the verses ends with the words: 'Surely in that there are signs for people who believe'."

Symbol of Fertility

The pomegranate, which grows in North Africa and western Asia, has been a symbol of fertility for thousands of years. Anti-bacterial agents derived from plants are not new, but the substance derived from this fruit can destroy more than one thousand million viruses in a few minutes, without apparently damaging human cells. It kills viruses on contact and is eight times more effective than other known agents.

Professor Steven Myint, Professor of Clinical Microbiology in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Leicester, is evaluating the discovery and assessing the power of the virucide against a variety of viruses.

"It certainly does kill viruses, including the HIV virus," says Professor Myint. "It has a lot of potential. It works in the test-tube, but we have not proved it works in the patient. It is possible that it is a major breakthrough. I've never seen anything like it. If it works, it is something that could be used by everybody."

Hospital spray

The initial aim is to develop a douche or cream to kill millions of viruses on contact. It may, for instance, be used as a coating on condoms for extra protection, or as a spray for hospital work surfaces. It has not yet been converted into a drug; in its present form it cannot be injected or taken internally because of the adverse effect it has on white blood cells.

A new company, JSD Technologies LTD, has been formed to work with the research teams at all three universities to explore the commercial potential of the discovery. The company has received two SMART (Small firms Merit Awards for Research and Technology) funding prizes from the U.K.'s Department of Trade and Industry and is overseeing a smooth transition between academic and commercial research technological bases.

JSD Technologies will work with Rio-Pharmaceuticals, a company that has been specialising in plant-based medicinal products since 1993 and that has also received SMART funding to carry out a one-year feasibility study into the therapeutic potential of the virucide.

Both Professor Stewart and Professor Myint exercise caution in the properties they claim for the discovery. They emphasise that it does not yet represent a cure to stop AIDS and may not prove to be effective as a medicine against the condition.

"I don't want to make claims we can't substantiate," says Professor Stewart. "At the moment we're excited about what we can prove." But Professor Myint is optimistic that the virucide will continue to be effective in preventing the spread of the HIV virus that leads to AIDS.

In the meantime, progress continues to be made and the Brighton University team has now characterised and purified the active ingredients. "The use of these extracts will be for diseases as diverse as common colds, skin warts and HIV," says Professor Myint.

"It will be a topical drug if it makes it to the market place. I am completely confused as to how it works," he confesses. "There seems to be a magic substance that kills within minutes."

So far, la grenade is living up to its name and for once saving lives rather than destroying them.

London Press Service

Caution: anything you post can be used against you

By Elizabeth Weise
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — When the 18th century writers of the U.S. Constitution decided to guarantee freedom of the press, they never imagined millions of Americans would some day have their own version of a printing press in their homes.

But with the advent of the World Wide Web, that's exactly what has happened. And from this revolution has emerged a new legal quandary: Just what standards are private individuals to be held to when it comes to what they "publish" on the millions of web pages and other online forums that serve as the world's soapbox?

To a great extent, the answer thus far is this: No one knows.

With the web revolution less than 3 years old, a body of case law hasn't yet been built up. But lawyers who study online issues do have some observations — and advice.

First off, they note, the line between slander, once the realm of individuals, and libel, the bane of publishers, has been blurred. It used to be that spreading malicious gossip about someone down at the barbershop could lead to charges of slander. But slander, by definition spoken, was hard to prove and generally didn't reach enough people to do any major harm.

Post that same information where it can be read by millions online, however, and you've suddenly entered the realm of libel — governed by stricter laws originally written to cover print publications.

"Let's face it," says Mark Rasch, director of information security law and policy at the Centre for Information Protection at Science Applications International Corp. in McLean, Virginia. "If I were to print up a handbill saying bad things about my neighbour that were false, at most I could distribute a couple of hundred of them. With the web, I can now damage his reputation worldwide."

The law is clear: libel consists of publishing a false and defamatory statement about an identifiable person, causing injury to the subject's reputation. Often tied to it is the legal notion of defamation, defined as that which exposes a person to hatred, ridicule or contempt, causing them to be shunned or injuring their business or calling.

Truth is always a defense against libel, so if your web page says someone has two heads and they do, you're fine. But say they're a murderer and you can expect someone to come asking for some proof — and possibly a bill for damages if you don't have any.

Then, there's invasion of privacy. It's one thing to pass along a juicy bit of gossip to a friend. It's quite another to post it to the web.

"Let's say, for instance, you disclose some private fact about somebody — say, their medical records. Or you snuck into their house and took a nude photo of them and put it up on the net. That would be a no-no under civil law and they could sue for damages."

"Let's say, for instance, you disclose some private fact about somebody — say, their medical records. Or you snuck into their house and took a nude photo of them and put it up on the net. That would be a no-no under civil law and they could sue for damages," says David Banisar, staff counsel for the Electronic Privacy Information Centre in Washington.

Although few of these cases have actually gone to court, lawyers often are called in when things get ugly.

"I know of a few cases where the ex-husband and ex-wife have gone after each other on the net," Mr. Banisar says. "In one instance, the ex-wife put up a diatribe page on what a scumbag he was and how he wasn't paying his child support — and gave out his phone number so suitably angry women could take it up with him."

Remember, too, that the Internet's reach magnifies everything in the eyes of the law.

Shouting "You jerk, I'm gonna belt you one per cent" at a careless driver who runs over your mailbox won't get you into trouble. But posting the threat on the Internet is dangerous. It's all a question of reach: anything done over a telecommunications device is automatically an interstate communication.

"This suddenly makes it a federal issue if you e-mail," Mr. Banisar warns.

State statutes vary, but when federal laws come into effect, any communication containing a threat to kidnap or injure a person carries with it the possibility of imprisonment up to five years or a fine of up to $1,000.

And an entirely different level of concern pops up when the object of the threat is an elected official. Like the "no jokes" signs posted by airport metal detectors, the FBI has no sense of humour when it comes to threatening officeholders.

"We can't forget all those idiots arrested for sending threats to the president. So don't send threats to the president over e-mail. It's a federal crime," Mr. Banisar says.

Fraud is another sticking point. It's illegal everywhere, of course. But the Federal Trade Commission has taken an especially hard line against fraud on the net. Send a snail-mail chain letter asking for money and you might get a call from postal authorities.

Try it on the web, however, and you'll be investigated by the ftc

forces who track online scammers.

But in the end, the biggest vulnerability of any self-publisher on the web is probably the wrath of large corporations.

You can say their logos are ugly and their presidents are jerks and they don't flinch. But try using any variety of a heavily trademarked name or image on your site and watch the injunctions flow.

Generally speaking, it's other businesses who get into trouble. But, once in a while, an individual will set out to make a point — and get a legally phrased e-mail in response. Several cases have resulted in web sites' being taken down, including individuals who posted statements against K-mart and McDonald's.

Overall, remember that putting words or pictures up on your web page is just like publishing them in the newspaper.

Remittances from Jordanian expatriates rise to JD300m during first quarter of 1997

By Samir Ghawi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Workers' remittances reached JD300 million during the first quarter of 1997, indicating a gradual rise since the major plunge that followed the Gulf crisis in 1990.

According to Ahmad Mustafa, executive director of the Research and Studies Department at the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), the trend is moving up and it will be more meaningful over a longer period of time.

Noting that the remittances during the first first quarter of 1996 were revised to JD264 million, Dr. Mustafa told the Jordan Times that the Central Bank official said work was under way to review the methods of analysing the date in order to arrive at more accurate estimates in the future.

Dr. Mustafa explained that Jordan has always enjoyed a surplus in the services trade and, as such, this surplus is of importance to narrow the gap in the balance of payments.

Asked about the outflow of funds from foreign labour working in Jordan, Dr. Mustafa said that the outflow was in the range of JD20 million per quarter based on the number of guest workers holding official work permits.

He highlighted that Jordanian expatriates were skilled labourers with high earnings whereas the foreign labour in Jordan is unskilled and earning much less.

Based on the JD300 million of inflow from expatriates, Dr. Mustafa expected total expatriates' remittances to reach JD1.2 billion compared to about JD1 billion in 1996.

Jordanian remittances were as low as JD573 million in 1992 but the amounts have been growing steadily to JD720.7 million in 1993, JD763.7 million in 1994 and JD871.7 million in 1995.

Other sources of receipts from services include travel, transportation, investment income, freight and insurance. Receipts from their services amounted to JD2.48 billion in 1996.

When JD1.16 billion of payments for education, medical care and tourism are considered in addition to the transfers of foreign workers, the net services balance stood at JD1.32 billion compared to JD952 million in 1995.

Asian appetites to boost world food prices for decades to come

FUKUOKA, Japan (AFP) — Lower production and rising demand in Asia is likely to boost world food prices in the coming decades, raising the need to achieve more agricultural efficiency in the region, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a report.

"Without question, Asia will have a growing impact on global food balances in the coming decades. The general view is that agricultural productivity in much of the region is likely to grow more slowly than in recent decades.

"At the same time, rising affluence and greater meat consumption will increase the demand for cereals in parts of Asia, particularly the China, although slower population growth in the region will partially offset the rise in demand," the bank said.

The study showed Asia's share of the world cereal trade alone was likely to increase from just over 25 per cent to around 40 per cent.

China and Pakistan are expected to account for a third of world wheat imports by the year 2020.

"Small changes in supply or demand conditions in Asia will have increasingly large spillover effects into the world market as Asia becomes an increasingly pivotal player in world cereal markets," it said.

The ADB noted that a recent study by the World Watch Institute projected that in the early 21st century, food prices will rise substantially as world production falters and the demand for cereals rises, especially in Asia.

"In particular, the institute anticipates that extremely large cereal imports by China will put intensive upward pressure on world food prices," the bank said.

But the ADB added that these projections were "overly pessimistic" and were based on "more systematically constructed" projections.

"Both the World Bank and the International Food Policy Research Institute believe that world cereal prices will not change significantly (in real terms) and may even continue to decline slowly as they have done throughout much of the 20th century," the bank pointed out.

"Nevertheless, these outcomes will not be achieved automatically," it said.

"To attain even modest growth in cereal production, Asia's governments will have to invest in agricultural research and improve the efficiency of irrigation," the ADB concluded.

Arabs least attractive for investment — report

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states have remained the least attractive countries for investment in the developing world although many of them have introduced reforms, according to an official report.

The Arab League's 22 members received less than one per cent of the total direct investment worldwide and 2.6 per cent of the capital invested in the developing countries in 1996, the Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation report said.

The Kuwait-based corporation estimated in the report obtained here Tuesday that total direct investment was $327 billion in 1996, of which developing nations received $121 billion.

"The share of international investment in the Arab World stood at around $31.5 billion in 1995 and the level is estimated to have remained unchanged last year," the report said.

It said the 1995 investment in the Arab countries declined by 15.8 per cent over the previous year but gave no figures.

The report showed non-Arab Asian countries had the largest share of world investment, receiving around $100 billion in 1995.

Nearly $65 billion were pumped into south and southeast Asia, it added.

The bulk of investments worldwide came from France, Japan, Britain, Germany and the United States, it said.

The report gave no reason for the low investment in the Arab region, where several member states have been engaged in reforms covering privatisations, improvement of investment laws and tackling financial and trade deficits.

But experts said the pace of capital inflow varied in those members, with Egypt, Tunisia and other Arab states that have gone furthest with the reforms reporting a sharp growth in foreign investment.

An official Arab report said recently political uncertainty and internal instability in some Arab countries, as well as the absence of a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East were to blame for the slow capital flow.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates — Prices as at 27/05/97 18:41

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.6998	0.6137	1.4160	116.49	1.3815	1676.10	1.9124	5.7350
DE Mark	0.5883	-	0.3608	0.8328	68.50	0.8130	985.42	1.1246	3.3723
GB Sterling	1.6294	2.7715	-	2.3072	189.73	2.2510	2731.04	3.1159	9.3446
CH Franc	0.7062	119.99	0.4328	-	82.21	0.9755	1182.85	134.94	4.0473
JP Yen	0.0086	1.4588	0.5263	1.2150	-	1.1855	14.38	164.06	4.9211
CA Dollar	0.7239	1.2327	0.4447	1.0262	1.19	-	1214.82	1.3862	4.1603
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0132	0.3657	0.0845	1441.13	0.8236	-	11.40	3.4196
NL Guilder	0.5229	88.87	0.3207	74.06	60.88	0.7221	875.99	-	2.9982
FR Franc	0.1744	0.2963	0.1069	24.6936	20.29	0.2410	33.34	33.3400	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7505	0.3768	3.6402	0.3021	3.6728	1537.50	3.3895
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2973	0.5322	5.1415	0.4267	5.1876	2171.61	4.7874
GB Sterling	0.2666	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0805	0.98	409.95	0.9037
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8769	9.9530	-	9.68	0.8017	9.75	4080.20	8.9949
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.0830	1.01	422.37	0.9311
Kuwait Dinar	3.3102	2.3436	12.4148	1.2473	12.05	-	12.16	5089.37	0.9311
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	0.1026	0.9911	0.0823	-	418.62	0.9229
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4605	2.4393	0.2451	2.3676	0.1965	2.3888	-	2.2045
Egyptian	0.2950	0.2089	1.1065	0.1112	1.0740	0.0891	1.0836	453.61	-

Energy

Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	20.20	20.50
W. Texa	21.35	21.20
Bonny	20.20	20.50
Dubai	18.90	18.95
UL Gas	204.00	208.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4536	0.16364	0.37781	31.0733
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.46316	0.1671	0.3858	31.7309
KW Dinar	3.3102	5.63063	2.03169	4.69043	385.802
BH Dinar	0.3768	4.51467	1.62868	3.76081	309.31
CY Pound	1.9679	3.3446	1.2071	2.7873	229.252

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	343.6	344.1
Silver (oz's)	4.73	4.75
Platinum (oz's)	396.5	397.5
AL (3 Months)	1640	1641
CU (3 Months)	2513	2514
Zinc (3 Months)	1362	1363
Lead (3 Months	637	638
NI (3 Months)	7350	7360

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period / Ccy	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
USD	5.56	5.69	5.85	5.99	6.07
GBP	6.29	6.44	6.59	6.69	6.81
JPY	0.46	0.50	0.56	0.75	0.87
DEM	2.94	2.94	3.00	3.06	3.06
FRF	3.36	3.48	3.54	3.57	3.59
CHF	0.87	1.25	1.31	1.18	1.43
ITL	6.74	6.71	6.64	6.54	6.52

Main Equity Indices

Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Prv Cls
NewYork	DOW JONES	7326.96	-18.96	-0.26	7342.2	7302.23	7345.91
Newyork	S&P 500	844.3	-2.73	-0.32	847.03	840.96	847.03
London	FT-SE 100	4681.3	19.5	0.42	4692.4	4661.2	4661.8
Tokyo	NIKKIE 225	19889.89	-153.61	-0.77	20149	19848.4	20043.5
Paris	CAC 40	2680.34	25.6	0.96	2681.03	2632.97	2654.74
Frankfurt	DAX	3674.36	16.5	0.45	3678.49	3664.36	3657.86

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	0	Spot
Cocoa ($/ton)	1479	Spot
Sugar ($/ton)	326.9	Spot
Wheat ($/ton)	162.5	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	23.07	Spot
Tea (stg/kg)	155	Spot
Barley ($/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice ($/ton)	480	Spot

*** JOD Cross Rates**

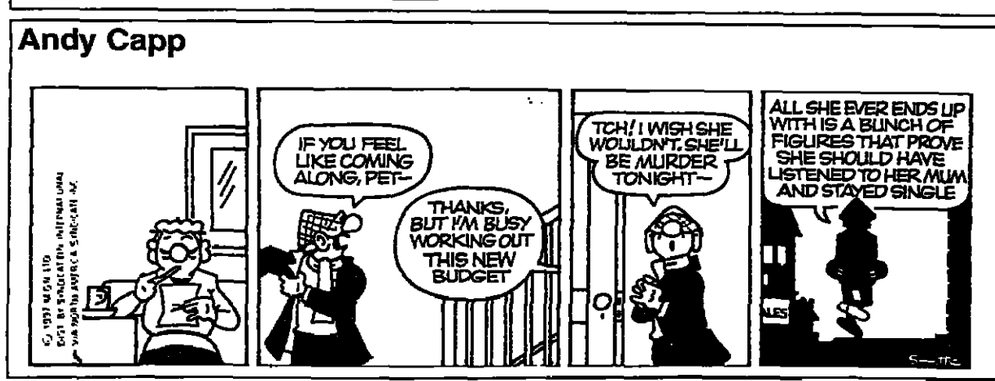
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1563	1.1621
DE Mark	0.4188	0.4209
CH Franc	0.5054	0.5079
FR Franc	0.1241	0.1247
JP Yen	0.6087	0.6117
NL Guilder	0.3724	0.3743
IT Lira	0.4242	0.4263

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Peanuts



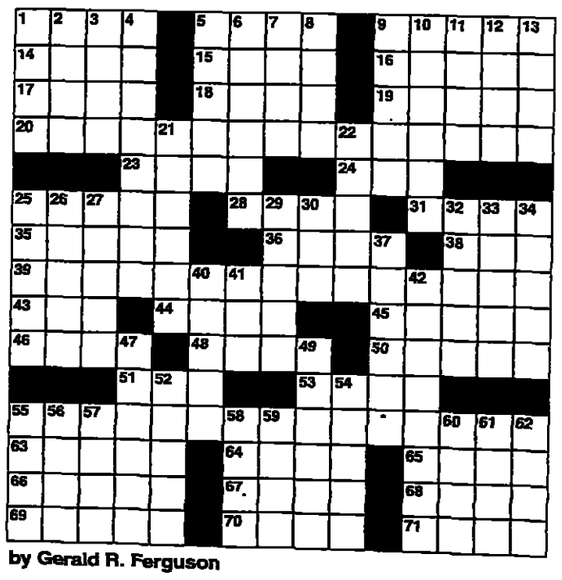
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword

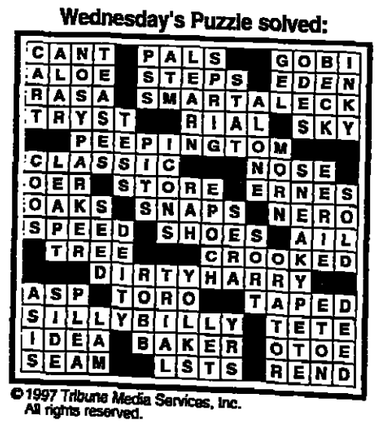


ACROSS
1 Suitable
5 French town
9 Kind of steamer
14 Indian prince
15 Opera song
16 Raptor's home
17 Lay — the line
18 Baseball ploy
19 Sign of fire?
20 Call it quits
23 Went down
24 Gaelic sea god
25 Weather word
28 Chimney particles
31 On the briny
35 Twin of Romulus
36 Space
38 School letters
39 Completed, finally
43 Bog
44 Belmont finish line
45 Actress Taylor
46 Koppel and Danson
48 Greek sandwich
50 Pledges
51 Hibachi accumulation
53 Cervine creature
55 Opera headline?
63 "Bolero" composer
64 Salinger dedicatee
65 German number
66 An Astaire
67 Luminary
68 Nasty remark
69 "The Bells of St. —"
70 Without
71 Trial run

DOWN
1 Courage
2 Vow
3 — about
4 "Jurassic Park" creature
5 Virologist Albert
6 Swimmers' togs
7 Fuzz
8 Vow
9 Personal preference
10 Marine fish
11 Lined up
12 Tyson or Wallace
13 Rind
21 — Pact
22 Singer John
25 Small farm, in England
26 Bank of Mississippi?
27 Alter a text
29 Call for food
30 Tic-tac-toe winner
32 Taking to court
33 Ms. Lauder
34 Throbs
37 Enters, as a freeway
40 Kind of cap or gown
41 Thirsty
42 Most tired
47 In a careful way
49 — out
52 Kind of resistance
54 Watchful ones
55 Mine car
56 "If I — Hammer"
57 At any time
58 Minus
59 Thin man's dog
60 — green
61 Brindled beasts
62 Spanish painter

by Gerald R. Ferguson

Wednesday's Puzzle solved:



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HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Visit as many friends as you can today, since each one will add to your contentment. If you buy a loved one a present, make it unique, so that he or she will be completely surprised and delighted by your efforts.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Even if bustling crowds usually make you a bit uncomfortable, today you'll enjoy the feeling of camaraderie which will be present. Later this evening will be a good time to meet with good friends for some fun.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Many new conditions and ideas will develop today, so make use of them and make your daily life more inspiring. Get plenty of rest this evening, for the next few days and the coming week will be stressful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) If any unusual circumstances arise today, handle them wisely and with good humour. Don't risk your reputation on any unproven business venture which could make others doubt your abilities to handle career activities.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You can find some great success today if you involve yourself in some public function. Be sure you wear your finest clothes, so you will radiate the appearance of someone who is prosperous and is respected.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Present your fellow associates with some thoughtful, but inexpensive gifts today, and they will look at you in a new light. Remain cheerful later this evening and thereby you can have a pleasant attitude for the days ahead.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) If you are invited to several parties tonight, try to attend as many as possible without tiring yourself out. Be thoughtful to your loved ones today and they will respond in a thoughtful and pleasant manner.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get your home in perfect order today, then have as many guests in as you can fit. Be a charming host or hostess to those who are in your home and thereby you can make a good impression upon them as a friendly individual.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your communication skills are especially sharp today, so make any calls, which will benefit you. Be very careful while driving on the highway this evening, so that you don't get into any difficulties.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Study your financial situation carefully today, and you can reap fine rewards in the days ahead. Listen carefully to any advice you receive from knowledgeable people and act upon this information with enthusiasm.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Show those in positions of power that you are ambitious today, and you'll get fine results. Get into the spirit later this evening of being with close friends and you will enjoy being in their company for fun activities.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Doing something unusual today for your mate can bring you both much happiness. Be sure that your plans for this evening include close friends and loved ones, who will be pleased to enjoy your company.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordan Tanning Company continues distributing high dividends despite lower sales, profit

** DESPITE LOWER sales and profit, the general assembly of the Jordan Tanning Company approved a recommendation from the board of directors to distribute cash dividends at a rate of 30 per cent. In 1995, dividends were distributed at a rate of 36 per cent.

The company's 1996 sales amounted to JD12.94 million of which JD10.38 million were from the tanning business. The remaining JD2.56 million were generated from the sales of shoes. The sales last year were 22 per cent or JD3.69 million less than the 1995 total of JD16.63 million.

Local sales amounted to JD5.31 million and exports totalled JD7.63 million last year compared to JD6.05 million and JD10.58 million respectively in 1995. The JD2.95 million drop in export represented 28 per cent of the exports volume in 1995.

As a result, the company posted a net profit of JD909,509 last year compared to JD1.26 million in 1995. The JD348,217 decline represented 28 per cent of the 1995 net profit.

Board Chairman Talal Ghazzawi said the company was able to supply the local market with its needs of shoes last year despite the difficulties that faced the tanning sector. He explained that the difficulties arose from higher prices of raw materials, decline in exports, competition from imported industrial leather and dumping of new and old shoes in the local market.

Mr. Ghazzawi said the company would continue to upgrade and modernise the equipment and machinery and will focus this year on processing and producing Australian leather supplied to the company in order to absorb all the quantities available in the country.

The chairman stressed the commitment of the board of directors to double the capital to JD2 million from funds available in the voluntary and additional reserves as well as retained earnings.

According to the annual report, the company has JD5.89 million in total assets and JD4.21 in total shareholders equity. The general assembly authorised transferring JD496,500 of 1996 profit to retained earnings (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

Citibank organises investment promotion Roadshow

** IN CONJUNCTION with the government of Jordan and the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Citibank is organising an international and investment Roadshow for Jordan on June 2-3. The Roadshow aims at familiarising U.S. investors with the Jordanian economy and its achievements. A Jordanian delegation headed by Jawad Anani, deputy prime minister, and Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, minister of planning, will be addressing U.S. investors in three U.S.A cities.

The Roadshow will kick-off in New York, the financial capital of the U.S., where a large number of U.S. investors, portfolio managers, investment and pension fund managers, in addition to representatives from major investment banks have been invited by Citibank to attend the presentations and to meet with the Jordanian officials. The Jordanian delegation will convey to investors the recent economic developments coupled with initiative to liberalise laws, and attract foreign investors.

Following New York, the delegation will head to Hartford, Connecticut and Boston Maryland, two major financial centres where large institutional investors are headquartered. The U.S. ambassador to Jordan, Wesley Egan and senior officials from the U.S. Department of State and Treasury will also speak at the three events.

The Roadshow will be hosted by the Vice Chairman of Citicorp/Citibank, and the General Manager of Citibank, Jordan, both of whom will also be addressing the U.S. investors and outlining the merits of investing in the Jordanian economy.

The country Roadshow is aimed at promoting U.S. investment into Jordan, both direct and portfolio investment. This effort is responding to the increasing interest from U.S. investors who perceived Jordan to become one of the major emerging markets in the Middle East.

Majali opens the Jordan Industries Fair



By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Tuesday deputised for HM King Hussein by inaugurating the Jordan Industries Fair in which 130 Jordanian firms are participating in addition to more than 120 Arab businessmen from 20 Arab states.

The fair focuses on the progress achieved by local industries in different fields such as food, iron, textiles, chemicals and medicines.

In a speech, Trade, Industry and Supply Minister Hani Mulki called upon Arab businessmen to unify their ranks to confront economic challenges that are facing them.

"At this stage we are facing a global and regional economic transformation that could affect the Arab economic efforts and bring several challenges to its achievements," Dr. Mulki told an audience attending the opening ceremony of the seven-day fair that was organised by the Amman Chamber of Industry.

Dr. Mulki stressed that the private sector should play a very important role to "take part in reformulating the mechanism of joint Arab economic cooperation to meet the requirements of the present stage."

He urged the gathering to work hard to create an "Arab economic framework where the Arab businessmen form the cornerstone, in order to take the initiative of a joint Arab economic effort."

Khaldoun Abu Hassan, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industry, said that during the past decades, Jordanian industry has achieved progress in several fields, especially the mining industries that enabled Jordan to compete in international markets.

Mr. Abu Hassan highlighted that Jordanian industries employ 150,000 workers who constitute 30 per cent of the total work force in the private sector, which he described as "a very important sector for easing the government employment burden."

He added that factories in Jordan employ 10,000 university graduates and that industrial production accounts for 22 per cent of the gross domestic product.

Among the Arab countries that are taking part in the fair are Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and other Arab countries.

Earlier this week, Mr. Abu Hassan said that he expected Jordanian businessmen to sign contracts with their Arab counterparts but he did not give further details.

Bahrain to display industrial products in Amman Monday

AMMAN (Petra) — Bahrain on Monday will open an exhibition of its industrial products in Amman Monday and will organise a special seminar to discuss investment and trade climates in Jordan and Bahrain.

The exhibition, expected to last five days will feature the products of 50 Bahraini industrial companies. The products will be put on display at the Amman Philadelphia Hotel by the Bahraini Ministry of Trade in conjunction with the Bahrain International Exhibitions Centre.

On display will be a wide range of equipment used in the oil, aluminium, petrochemical, textiles, mechanical equipment, food stuffs, furniture, plastics, electrical appliances, medical appliances traditional handicrafts and jewellery industries of the Gulf state.

The investment seminar, which is expected to be held on the second day of the exhibition, is being organised by the Amman Chamber of Industry in conjunction with the Bahraini chambers to outline Jordanian-Bahraini trade prospects for investments and joint ventures.

During the exhibition there will be meetings grouping business communities from Bahrain and Jordan to discuss bilateral trade. Bahrain is sending a delegation of 35 economists and businessmen representing the various trade and economic sectors to attend the meetings and the exhibition.

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUSEDAY 27/05/1997

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
	269.000	213.000	ARAB BANK	11.8	1.56	14	800	204070	255.00	256.00	1.00+
N	2.100	1.680	JOR.NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	76	83923	161362	1.87	1.96	.09+
	5.500	4.100	CAIRO AMMAN BANK	10.8	2.86	4	7100	37275	5.00	5.25	.25+
	3.600	2.760	BANK OF JORDAN	11.0	0.00	6	5351	16218	3.00	3.04	.04+
	1.210	.880	MID.EAST INV.BK.	67.0	0.00	15	6939	7213	1.07	1.02	.05-
	2.480	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	8.1	7.76	3	473	1030	2.18	2.18	-
	5.100	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	14.6	3.97	20	7675	37571	4.90	4.89	.01-
	2.950	2.440	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	19.3	0.00	7	831	2197	2.62	2.66	.04+
	1.050	.790	JOR.GULF BANK	4.7	8.86	1	250	198	.79	.79	-
	4.050	3.480	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	14.9	3.27	12	3132	11395	3.62	3.67	.05+
	2.080	1.220	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	P	0.00	4	2500	3080	1.23	1.23	-
	3.800	3.000	JOR.INV.FIN.BANK	20.4	0.00	2	1360	4260	3.17	3.17	-
	2.850	1.000	BEIT.AL-MAL (BEITMA)	.7	12.61	2	200	237	1.13	1.19	.06+
	1.440	1.000	PHILADEL.INV.BK.	g	0.00	2	200	221	1.12	1.11	.01-
	BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 194.55	%CHG: +0.59	168	120724	486345			
	3.100	2.800	JORDAN INSURANCE	12.2	5.26	1	50000	142500	2.85	2.85	-
	2.800	1.850	YARMOUK INSUR.	9.8	8.11	1	1000	1850	1.85	1.85	-
	2.200	1.820	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	7.1	5.49	2	2000	3640	1.82	1.82	-
	INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 113.59	%CHG: 0.00	4	53000	147990			
	1.820	1.450	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	8.1	5.95	18	24600	41301	1.67	1.68	.01+
	9.250	7.800	JOR.HOTEL TOURISM	11.5	1.38	4	14600	116800	8.00	8.00	-
	5.700	4.100	ARAB INTL.HOTELS	17.5	3.51	2	650	3579	5.70	5.69	.01-
	1.480	.930	MAIL. PORTFOLIO	g	0.00	99	91150	109450	1.20	1.22	.02+
	2.120	1.170	MID. EAST HOTELS	19.7	0.00	6	2490	3216	1.33	1.29	.04-
	3.720	2.900	ARAB INTL.INV.EDUC.	7.8	0.00	7	7600	22800	3.00	3.00	-
	1.220	.960	ZARKA EDUCATION	g	0.00	4	2750	2720	.97	.99	.02+
	SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 110.35	%CHG: +0.03	140	143840	299865			
↑	4.000	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	27.0	2.74	72	64307	256743	3.99	4.01	.02+
↑	3.510	2.710	JOR.PHOSPHATE MINES	9.9	2.79	9	1926	6787	3.50	3.58	.08+
↑	6.560	4.950	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.3	3.03	16	30600	204319	6.56	6.59	.03+
	10.400	8.720	JOR. PETROL.REFINERY	9.0	9.52	1	60	560	9.30	9.34	.04+
	3.260	1.650	INDUSTRIAL COMM.AGR.	g	0.00	21	6742	13415	1.97	2.00	.03+
	3.970	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	10.1	5.36	28	7250	26920	3.70	3.73	.03+
	7.250	5.650	JOR.CERAMIC IND.	6.9	2.99	1	400	2680	6.75	6.70	.05-
	2.570	2.050	JORDAN DAIRY	7.8	10.63	1	100	230	2.30	2.30	-
↓	2.930	2.210	GENERAL MINING	g	0.00	1	100	210	2.21	2.10	.11-
	5.850	4.250	DAR ALDAWA DV.INV.	11.9	5.15	7	1400	6761	4.83	4.85	.02+
	.960	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.8	0.00	16	14300	7248	.50	.51	.01+
	1.310	1.020	ARAB PAPER CONV.TRD.	31.8	0.00	14	4935	5136	1.03	1.04	.01+
	.860	.520	NATIONAL INDS.	g	0.00	7	4250	2235	.52	.53	.01+
	1.540	.700	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	g	0.00	6	1500	1053	.72	.70	.02-
	1.170	.570	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM.	g	0.00	2	1500	915	.61	.61	-
	1.670	1.120	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	18.1	4.93	12	4900	6971	1.42	1.42	-
	2.610	1.410	UNIV. MODN.INDS.	P	.18	5	700	1015	1.44	1.46	.02+
	1.680	1.130	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	15.2	8.85	5	15200	17188	1.14	1.13	.01-
	1.610	1.300	MAIL. CHLORINE	13.4	4.93	5	6750	9585	1.42	1.42	-
	1.230	.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.8	0.00	9	6550	5633	.86	.86	-
	2.090	1.570	EL -EAY READY WEAR	58.3	0.00	1	350	550	1.57	1.57	-
	1.330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.2	0.00	19	12350	13992	1.15	1.13	.02-
	INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 125.08	%CHG: +0.63	288	186170	590145			
	GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 157.62	%CHG: +0.57	600	503734	1524345			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUSEDAY 27/05/1997

	.650	.370	CENTRAL GEN.STORAGE	g	0.00	1	500	195	.39	.39	-
	.750	.410	JOR.TRADE FAC.	13.1	0.00	47	93200	45258	.48	.49	.01+
N	1.550	1.050	ZARA FOR INVESTMENT	24.5	0.00	2	550	652	1.18	1.24	.06+
	.840	.660	UNION INV. 50%	g	0.00	5	10799	1837	.67	.68	.01+
	.810	.370	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	g	0.00	16	11450	5601	.49	.49	-
N	.950	.730	AL-SHARQ INV. 75%	E	0.00	6	4800	2445	.76	.76	-
N	.950	.610	AL-DAWLIYAH 75%	14.2	0.00	1	350	133	.63	.63	-
	1.090	.570	UNIVL. METALS	E	0.00	2	396	226	.57	.57	-
	.670	.430	ARAB INTL.INV.TRD.	50.7	0.00	2	2000	880	.45	.44	.01-
	.720	.490	MAIL. TEXTILE	g	0.00	5	1650	809	.50	.49	.01-
	.800	.400	MAIL.MULT.ENG.MAMICO	E	0.00	30	43036	24529	.57	.57	-
	.960	.710	JORDAN STEEL	E	0.00	7	11010	7882	.71	.71	-
	.590	.430	ARAB ELECT.INDS.	P	0.00	2	6709	3422	.51	.51	-
	1.260	.860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	E	0.00	7	2268	1403	.87	.87	-
	.760	.550	RAZI PHARM. 85%	E	0.00	1	800	352	.58	.59	.01+
	.610	.390	INDS. ENG.	25.9	0.00	6	5500	2310	.42	.42	-
	.930	.760	INDS. CERAMIC	21.0	0.00	4	1300	1040	.79	.80	.01+
	.820	.590	MAIL. POULTRY	E	0.00	23	31635	21491	.66	.69	.03+
N	1.000	.810	MAN.ALUMINIUM. 75%	P	0.00	10	3516	2144	.87	.86	.01-
	.870	.530	MID.EAST COMPLEX	7.9	0.00	27	18800	12558	.66	.67	.01+
	GRAND TOTAL					204	250269	135165			

↑ : New 12 months high
↓ : New 12 months low
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Aqaba prepares to host world skydiving championship

Over 300 participants expected in tourism-promoting event

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In a first-of-its-kind sporting event in the Arab World, the Royal Jordanian Parachute Club (RJPC) will host the 4th Parachuting Championship in Aqaba June 1-11.

The championship, aimed at promoting tourism in the Kingdom, will bring together 300 civilian participants from all over the world, and is organised by RJPC in cooperation with the Parachuting Over 40 Society (P.O.P.S).

According to the club Vice President Samih Janakat, the championship will be the unprecedented event in the Arab World, adding that a military parachuting championship was held in Abu Dhabi in 1995.

Mr. Janakat told the Jordan Times that P.O.P.S. brings together all members from all over the world once every two years in different countries depending on the country's compliance with the championship's conditions.

"Jordan was the ideal place for the championship, its good weather, blue skies, tourism and history made it eligible to host this event," said Mr. Janakat.

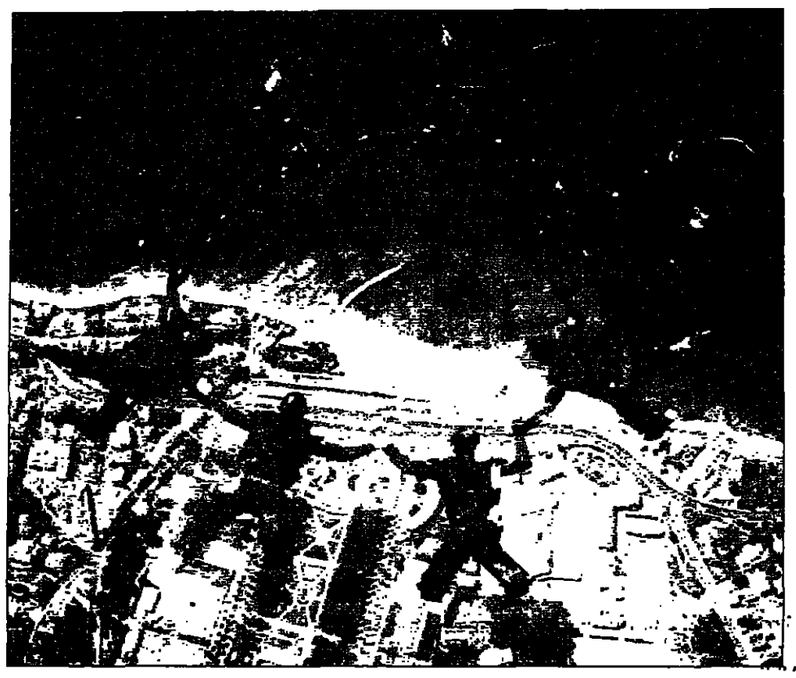
The championship in Aqaba, Mr. Janakat added, will seek to break P.O.P.S record in group parachuting which reached 100 people in a single free fall in Spain in 1995.

"About 120 people will perform a single free fall in three trials, in Dissa, Aqaba as well as at Aqaba airport," explained Mr. Janakat.

He said participants will perform display jumps in the first three days of the championship adding that the actual competition will start June 4.



HRH Prince Ali during a skydiving attempt (photo courtesy of RJPC)



Skydivers such as these will soar high above Aqaba in their record-breaking attempt

"RJPC President His Royal Highness Prince Ali will also perform display parachuting to raise the participants' morale," said Mr. Janakat.

In the competition, participants will perform single free falls, group scramble parachuting as well as group parachuting, Mr. Janakat added.

Although this championship is considered to be one of the most important events held in the Kingdom, Mr. Janakat complained of the lack of funding and sponsorship.

He said that the club in Jordan will cover most of the championship's costs which are expected to reach up to JD 25,000 — JD 30,000. Mr. Janakat added that the Ministry of Culture and Youth donated JD 1500, and promised additional JD 1500 after the championship and the Arab Potash Company donated JD 1500.

However, inconsiderable of the expenses. Mr. Janakat stressed that this event will promote the club and its activities, and most importantly tourism in the Kingdom.

Following the championship, participants will have the opportunity to visit the historical sites in Jordan, said Mr. Janakat, adding the Ministry of Tourism will give all the visitors free admittance to the rose red city of Petra.

The Royal Jordanian Parachuting Club was established in 1996 for performing para gliding, parachuting, sky diving, simulated jumping among other air sports.

British supercar trundles across Jordanian desert

AMMAN (R) — Britain's jet-powered car Thrust SSC gingerly rolled out on its first test run in the Jordanian desert on Monday since flash floods washed away its hopes of breaking the world land speed record last year.

Current world record holder Richard Noble said the car, powered by twin jet engines from a phantom warplane, trundled across the mudflats of Al-Jafr at around 160 kilometres per hour.

Noble's Thrust supersonic team are using their trials in Jordan to prepare for an assault later in the year in the United States on his own world speed record of 1,019.44 kph.

They also hope to go one stage further and exceed the speed of sound (about 1,200 kph.

Last year, after announcing they would break the speed record on a daily basis in Jordan, they failed to match even half that speed. The 9.5 tonne car suffered suspension problems and rear steering of its solid aluminium wheels caused trouble.

Noble finally gave in when the heaviest rains in five years turned their track, mapped out on the parched desert where scenes from "Lawrence of Arabia" were filmed, into a lake.

He said the team hoped to turn up the power to nudge the car up to 480 kph on the second run.

"Once we pass that point we'll have a higher level of confidence in the steering and the rear suspension," he said.

The Thrust team say they will not attempt to break the world record in Al-Jafr, an arid basin about 200 kilometres south of Amman, because it is not wide enough.

To notch up a world record the car's speed must be measured over the same one mile (1.6 km) strip on two separate runs, in opposite directions. The car, with powerful brakes and a parachute, needs about seven miles to slow down.

"We'll try to set a one-way mark. It won't be considered a record," Noble's younger brother Andrew told Reuters.

The Thrust car, driven by British Royal Air Force pilot Andy Green, is racing to beat the speed of sound before U.S. driver Craig Breedlove.

Breedlove had to postpone his own challenge last year when his car, the Spirit of America, was damaged in a high speed accident in the Black Rock desert of Nevada.



Toronto Blue Jays' pitcher Roger Clemens is shown in this triple exposure pitching against the Texas Rangers in the fourth inning. The Blue Jays defeated the Rangers 8-1 to give Clemens a perfect 9-0 win record, the current best in the Major Leagues. Clemens pitched seven innings threw 120 pitches, allowing only five hits and one run (Reuters photo)

Bonds leads Giants past Astros; Rockies upset Cards

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Barry Bonds led off the bottom of the ninth inning with his first home run in 10 days, giving the San Francisco Giants a 4-3 victory over the Houston Astros Monday.

In Pittsburgh, Kevin Foster and two relievers combined on a three-hitter and the Chicago Cubs edged the Pirates 2-1 in a game that saw two inside-the-park homers in the same inning.

Chicago's Sammy Sosa had an inside-the-park homer in the top of the sixth and Pittsburgh's Tony Womack did it in the bottom. It is believed to be the first time in Major-League history that different teams hit inside-the-park homers in the same inning.

In San Diego, Michael Tucker had three hits and drove in three runs and five relievers combined to allow one run and five hits over the final 6 2/3 innings as the Atlanta Braves routed the Padres 12-5.

In Cincinnati, the Reds swept a doubleheader with the Philadelphia Phillies.

In the opener, Bret Boone capped a five-run third inning with a two-run homer as the Reds won 8-5 and John Smiley (5-6) won for the fourth time in five starts.

Gregg Jefferies hit a two-run homer and Kevin Jordan added a solo shot for Philadelphia, which has lost four of five.

In the nightcap, Mike Morgan (2-4) allowed three runs and six hits in seven innings and Barry Larkin went 3-for-3 with a walk as the Reds won 8-4.

At Colorado, Andres Galarraga hit a two-run homer and Vinny Castilla followed with a home run off reliever Mark Petkovsek (2-4) in the eighth as the Rockies rallied from a 6-0 deficit and defeated the St Louis Cardinals 9-7.

In Los Angeles, Eric Karros hit a two-run homer and Chan Ho Park (3-2) pitched 6 2/3 strong innings as the Dodgers beat the Florida Marlins 5-3 for their third straight win.

In Montreal, Rey Ordonez's two-out RBI single in the top of the eighth capped a three-run rally and Greg McMichael pitched out of a bases-loaded, none-out jam in the bottom of the frame as the New York Mets beat the Expos 4-3.

The win was the Mets' 19th in their last 27 games and moved them five games over .500 for the first time this season.

Jays rout Rangers as Indians beat Sox

TORONTO (R) — Everything was beautiful for Roger Clemens Monday as he become the first nine-game winner in the majors thanks to the Toronto Blue Jays' 8-1 rout of the Texas Rangers.

"The defence was beautiful. our defence has been outstanding," Clemens said. "The hitters were beautiful. Tonight the hitters deserved the credit, they set the tempo. Hopefully, it'll be a roller coaster and keep feeding on itself."

Clemens (9-0) allowed one run over seven innings and won his sixth straight start, giving up four hits with four walks and seven strikeouts. Paul Quantrill finished up with two scoreless innings.

At Minnesota, Edgar Martinez drilled a pair of three-run homers, Jay Buhner also homered twice and Joey Cora ran his hitting streak to 21 games with a leadoff blast as the Seattle Mariners cruised to a 13-8 victory over the Twins.

In Chicago, Marquis Grissom's three hits and Jim Thome's three RBI spearheaded an offensive attack that saw all nine starters reach base and eight different players score as the Cleveland Indians routed the White Sox 10-4.

Manny Ramirez added three hits and two RBI as the Indians banged out 13 hits. The only starter who didn't score was Dave Justice, who with a single and two walks reached base for the 43rd time in 44 games.

The game marked the first time Albert Belle played against his former club. He got a single in his final at-bat to extend his hitting streak to 21 games, matching his career high and keeping him even with Cora for longest in the majors.

Chicago got back-to-back hin New York, B.J. Surhoff drove in three runs, including a two-run single that capped a six-run seventh inning, as the Baltimore Orioles handed Andy Pettitte consecutive losses for the first time in 53 starts in an 8-6 win over the Yankees.

Brady Anderson also drove in three runs as the first-place Orioles won for the seventh time in their last nine games and increased their cushion over the Yankees in the American League East to seven games.

It was the first meeting between the teams since last year's league championship series, won by the Yankees 4-1.

In Detroit, Omar Olivares tossed a four-hit shutout and Travis Fryman drove in three runs as the tigers beat the Anaheim Angels 6-0.

In Kansas City, Scott Spiezio singled in Jose Canseco in the top of the 11th as the Oakland Athletics edged the Royals 2-1 for just their fifth win in 19 games.

Royals' starter Kevin Appier recorded a season-high 10 strikeouts, extending his own club record by fanning at least 10 for the 19th time.

In Boston, Tim Naehring's ninth-inning double off the left-field wall scored Wil Cordero and pinch-runner Jeff Frye to give the Red Sox a 3-2 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers.

Mike Matheny had a two-run homer for Milwaukee.

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Golden Four organisers abandon blood testing

LONDON (R) — Organisers of the elite Golden Four athletics meetings have abandoned blood testing for performance-enhancing drugs.

The meetings in Oslo, Zurich, Brussels and Berlin are the leading events on the Grand Prix circuit.

"We stopped the blood tests because there didn't seem any point in continuing," said Wilfried Meert, director of the Brussels meeting.

"We expected the international federation to introduce a new rule that allowed blood testing, that our tests would be a first step.

"But this never happened. And the International Amateur Athletic Federation's (IAF) own experts kept telling us that urine samples give just as good results."

Results of 99 samples from the Golden Four meetings, announced in a specialist medical magazine, show three of 36 women athletes tested had testosterone levels above the normal range.

The women would have been liable to four-year suspensions if they had been discovered by the IAAF's standard urine analysis.

Ronaldo agents meet Barcelona on new contract

MADRID (R) — Agents for Brazilian striker Ronaldo started negotiating a new contract on Monday with his Spanish club Barcelona.

Ronaldo, who has been linked to a number of Italian and English clubs, said last week that he would disclose his future plans on Monday.

His agent Alexa Martins said he was doubtful Barcelona would agree to Ronaldo's terms.

"We have been talking for six months and we have changed nothing," he told journalists on arrival in Barcelona. "Everything has been done so that he could stay."

The 20-year-old striker has scored 34 goals this season putting him far ahead in both the spanish goalscoring table and in the European Leagues' Golden Boot competition.



Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein distributes medals at the Baccalaureate School Gymnastics Championship. Zeina Sha'ban, shown here, secured first overall place for her team when she clinched first place in the floor exercise, the parallel bars and pommel horse. Al Zarqa schools came in second and the Montessori third. The Modern Schools and the International Community School also took part.



Combo of Miami Heat center Alonzo Mourning (R) battling Chicago Bulls' forward Dennis Rodman in a second-half altercation during their NBA playoff game in the Miami Arena. The penalties given cancelled each other out and neither player was ejected. The Heat won the game 87-80 to avoid elimination (Reuters photo)

Heat stay alive by beating Bulls

MIAMI (R) — Alonzo Mourning kept his promise and the Miami Heat capitalised on a woeful three quarters by Michael Jordan, then held on by their fingernails for an 87-80 win over the Chicago Bulls Monday to stay alive in the Eastern Conference finals.

Mourning, who had guaranteed that the heat would win game 4 after losing the first three games, got 18 points and 14 rebounds as Miami nearly blew a 21-point lead but dealt the bulls just their second loss of the playoffs.

Game 5 is Wednesday at Chicago.

"I didn't regret predicting a victory," Mourning said. "I knew we were going to have a totally different attitude and play the game a lot more focused and aggressive."

Jordan missed his first 14 shots and was 2-of-23 from the field through three quarters before carrying the bulls in the fourth. He scored 18 straight Chicago points to cut the lead to 79-78 with 2:17 remaining.

"Physically, I felt good," Jordan said. "In the first quarter I found myself trying to beat the shot clock, so I really didn't get any good looks. From that point on, I found myself pressing, just trying to find a rhythm to my game. I was just missing easy shots."

"He had the ball plenty of times in the first three quarters," Bulls coach Phil Jackson said. "They were just opportunities he didn't take advantage of."

Jordan missed a late jumper that could have given the bulls the lead, and mourning had two free throws and a dunk off a nice feed by bench man John Crotty in the final 90 seconds to seal the win.

Tim Hardaway scored 25 points and Jamal Mashburn added 17 for the Heat, who beat the Bulls for the first time in 10 post season meetings and improved to 5-0 in elimination games.

"We got up and down, kept running and running," said Hardaway. "In order to get good looks we have to run the ball."

"He was the X-factor for their ballclub today," Jackson said of Hardaway. "We'll have to identify him better for Game 5."

Jordan scored 29 points but was just 9-of-35 from the field, including 0-of-8 from 3-point range. Jordan was 0-for-11 in the first half and 2-for-12 in the third period but went down shooting.

"We held Michael to nine points in three quarters," said Miami coach Pat Riley. "We shot the ball very well and competed. I don't think we can hold Michael down like that but we have to do the rest in Chicago to have a chance."

"I got with it too late, much too late," said Jordan. "We gave them early looks and they seemed to be ready to play. It will be different in Chicago."

A tussle underneath the basket ended up with mourning putting a headlock on Bulls forward Dennis Rodman and wrestling him to the baseline floor.

No other players were involved, and there were no ejections — just technical fouls on Mourning and Rodman, who has received at least one in all 12 playoff games.

"He's like flypaper, you can't get away from him," said Riley, who came off the bench to help pry apart the players. "He like sticks to you."

French Open

Graf wins opening match in uneven performance

PARIS (AP) — A rusty-looking Steffi Graf, the defending women's champion, moved into the second round of the French Open Tuesday by beating Paola Suarez 6-1, 6-4 in 54 minutes.

In a roller-coaster match, two-time champion Jim Courier fought back from two sets down but in the end went out in five sets against Magnus Larsson, 6-1, 6-2, 4-6, 1-6, 6-4.

Courier, the 1991 and 1992 champion and a former No. 1 who has dropped to No. 22, was not seeded. Larsson, a semi-finalist here in 1994, is now ranked No. 39.

A break down and trailing 4-2 in the third set, Courier won 10 of the next 11 games to level the match. But a break in the third game of the decisive set put Larsson ahead for good.

"He gave me an easy break at the beginning of the fifth set and that was the difference," Larsson said.

Two contenders also had to struggle through five sets before advancing.

Marcelo Rios, recent winner in Monte Carlo and the No. 7 seed, rallied to outlast Wayne Black 6-4, 5-7, 4-6, 6-2, 6-1.

Mark Philippoussis, the most powerful server in the game, hit 29 aces in ousting Nicklas Kulti 6-2, 4-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 in the first five-set match of his career.

Tim Henman became the second seeded man to be knocked out. The No. 14 Briton lost 6-2, 2-6, 1-6, 6-2, 6-4 to Olivier Delaitre.

Graf, a five-time winner since 1983 on the red clay of Roland Garros, struggled to close out the match against the Argentine, ranked No. 81 in the world. Seeded No. 2 this year behind Martina Hingis, Graf appeared far from her peak form. Although she wore a small bandage on her left knee, she showed few visible effects of the surgery she had earlier this year.

This is only Graf's third tournament since returning to action two weeks ago after a three-month layoff.

"I felt a lot better than last week, I served much stronger," Graf said.

The German breezed through the first set in 22 minutes and led 5-1 in the second. But she then lapsed into a slew of unforced errors and lost three straight games before finally serving out the match.

"The mistakes came late in the second set, maybe I lost my concentration a little. I rushed my shots," Graf said.

During her absence, Graf lost the No. 1 ranking to Hingis, a 16-year-old sensation who is unbeaten in six tournaments this year, including the Australian Open.

Hingis was in action later Tuesday against Henrieta Nagyova.

Mary Joe Fernandez, the No. 12, cruised past Lori McNeil, at 33 the oldest woman in the field, 6-2, 6-3.

Brenda Schultz-McCarthy, seeded No. 14, defeated Lenka Cenkova 6-3, 7-5, and No. 15 Karina Habsudova beat Olga Barnbanschikova 6-3, 6-3.

Carlos Moya, the ninth-seeded Australian Open runner-up, completed a tough five-set victory over qualifier Alberto Martin, a fellow Spaniard, 6-3, 6-7 (7-3), 5-7, 6-3, 6-3. The match had been suspended because of darkness after four sets Monday.

Second-seeded Michael Chang, the 1989 champion, met Rodolphe Gilbert, while fourth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic played Magnus Gustafsson.

After struggling on clay so far this season, top-seeded Pete Sampras and two past champions, Thomas Muster of Austria and Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia, all won their first-round matches Monday.

Sampras had lost his opening-round matches in Monte Carlo and Rome, then pulled out of last week's World Team Cup in the first round with a thigh injury.

"This is the only tournament that I haven't won, so I'll do whatever I can over the years and this year to try to win here," said Sampras, who has captured three Wimbledon titles, four U.S. Opens and two Australian Opens.

Women's winners on the first day of the two-week event included third-seeded Monica Seles, No. 5 Lindsay Davenport, No. 7 Conchita Martinez, No. 9 Iva Majoli and No. 10 Mary Pierce.

The first seeded player to be eliminated was No. 12 Alberto Berasategui, who was forced by leg cramps to withdraw in the fifth set against Andrei Medvede.



Germany's Steffi Graf serves againt Paola Suarez of Argentina during early action in their French Open match, May 27. Graf defeated Suarez 6-1 6-4 (Reuters photo)

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN JORDAN : AN INVITATION

The office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Jordan hereby invites Jordanian academic institutions, consultancy firms and/or publishing houses to submit written indications of interest in being considered as the primary partner and sub-contractor for the production of the first "Human Development Report" on Jordan.

Since 1990, UNDP has published annually a global "Human Development Report" which has addressed a number of fundamental problems related to socio-economic development throughout the world. In the last few years, this type of people-centred analysis has been replicated in more than 35 countries worldwide in the form of *national* Human Development Reports. The Government of Jordan and UNDP have agreed to produce a similar report on the "human development" situation in Jordan and are now searching for a reputable Jordanian institution to implement this task under the supervision and guidance of a high-level Advisory Committee and a working-level Task Force. The partner institution we are looking for will be expected to :

(a) manage the practical aspects of the research work which will be carried out by working groups of selected experts from both Governmental agencies and private institutions, e.g. assist in the preparation of their terms of reference and ensure that they adhere to the quality requirements and deadlines stipulated in the contracts awarded to them;

(b) review all papers produced by the selected experts, take part in peer reviews of such papers, and subject them to a final edit by incorporating all agreed changes;

(c) collate all inputs into the Report-whether chapters, boxes with special features, or statistical tables - and prepare the final lay-out of the report;

(d) supervise the work of the professional translators who will be hired to translate all inputs originally written in Arabic into English and vice versa; and

(e) oversee finalization of the final manuscripts of both of the Arabic and the English version of the Report and ensure that they are printed and published at a reasonable cost in a high-quality format.

Final responsibility for the end product will remain with the Government and UNDP, but the sub-contractor will be held accountable for the quality and the timeliness of the production process itself.

Jordanian institutions interested in being considered as sub-contractor for this task are requested to submit a dossier with detailed information about their past experience in related fields of activity, the qualifications of the staff they propose to assign for this purpose, and the levels of remuneration they propose to offer such staff per work-month. An indication should also be given for each collaborator which proportion of his/her working time can be devoted to this assignment during the period from 1 July to 31 December 1997.

Institutions interested in this assignment can obtain more background information about the scope and the nature of the work required from the receptionist at the UNDP office in Shmeisani. Formal indications of interest should be delivered by hand to the UNDP office in Shmeisani or sent to P.O. Box 35286, Amman *no later than Thursday 12 June 1997.*

Clinton faces domestic hurdles after NATO-Russia new accord

PARIS (R) — The popping of champagne corks to fete the signing of NATO's new pact with Russia on Tuesday took none of the fizz out of an increasingly heated U.S. debate about President Bill Clinton's push to enlarge the Western alliance.

Influential voices in the United States are already questioning the wisdom of Mr. Clinton's policy, which is expected to reach full bloom at a NATO summit in Madrid in July. At that meeting, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, and perhaps others, are likely to be asked to join NATO.

Political pundits like the Washington Post's David Broder and Thomas Friedman of the New York Times and a sizeable number of academic experts have expressed doubts about the move, which cannot proceed without U.S. Senate approval by a two-thirds majority vote.

Mr. Friedman has gone so far as to describe Mr. Clinton's advocacy of NATO expansion as "the whitewater of Clinton foreign policy," a comparison to the complex web of legal, ethical and financial questions that has clouded Mr. Clinton's presidency.

"The question of how the United States will stretch a shrinking military force to protect Warsaw, Prague and Budapest has not been addressed, nor has the question of how those struggling countries will finance the modernisation of their forces needed to bring them up to NATO standards," Mr. Broder wrote last week.

"Even more vague is the question of how far this process goes — and what happens if the Baltic countries and such former Soviet republics as Ukraine are brought into NATO or forever barred," he said.

In an interview with the Itar-Tass news agency on the eve of the Paris signing, Russian President Boris Yeltsin said Moscow would not look kindly on any NATO expansion involving former Soviet republics, a clear reference to the three Baltic states.

U.S. Critics of enlargement say the price of the policy may well be a Russian failure to make promised cuts in its nuclear arsenal, and ask how such a trade-off would advance American national security.

They also claim the policy was inspired by Mr. Clinton's 1996 re-election strategy of wooing voters of eastern European ancestry in pivotal midwest states, although administration officials deny this.

"The president set this course back in 1994, when he first articulated it," U.S. National Security Adviser Samuel Berger told reporters. "Our view is that by embracing the emerging democracies of Central Europe in an enlarging NATO, we can begin to help build the stability in the East that NATO has in the West."

Mr. Clinton's critics say that a better way to promote European stability would be for Washington to push for greater economic integration on the continent. U.S. Officials counter that this week's French parliamentary elections showed the inherent weakness of that approach.

The first round of the voting, which left President Jacques Chirac's government in crisis as the Paris ceremony unfolded, showed strong gains for the socialist and communist opposition which has criticised austerity imposed to qualify for a single European currency, and for the extreme-right National Front which opposes further European integration.

Mr. Clinton does not face a partisan fight over NATO enlargement — former Senator Bob Dole, his Republican rival in last year's election, also backs the policy. But given the strong isolationist pressures that have coursed through the U.S. Political system ever since George Washington warned the country to "beware of foreign entanglements," the Clinton administration is taking nothing for granted.

"This is not a slam dunk. This is not going to be easy and it should not be, given the stakes involved," said Deputy U.S. Secretary Of State Strobe Talbott, applying a basketball scoring metaphor to the prospective senate vote on NATO enlargement.

Mr. Clinton's three-day European trip, which also included celebration of the U.S. Marshall plan that helped lift Western Europe from the wreckage of world war two, is part of an orchestrated White House campaign to sell the U.S. Public on NATO enlargement, officials said.

"We must rise to Marshall's challenge in our day ... We must create the institutions and understandings that will advance the security and prosperity of the American people for the next 50 years," Mr. Clinton said as he began the trip.



PRAYERS FOR BAQOURA SHOOTER: Wife of Corporal Ahmad Dakamseh prays during her husband's trial which openned yesterday at a military court in Naour. The wife (R) and mother (L) broke into tears several times during the one-hour court session and chanted slogans of support (see story on page 1) (Photo by Youssef 'Allan)

Erbakan OKs sacking of 161 Turkish officers

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan on Monday approved the dismissal of 161 officers from the pro-secular army, mostly for having Islamist sympathies, the press reported Tuesday.

The supreme military council — on which Mr. Erbakan also sits — said Monday it had expelled a number of officers after a "review of the internal and external threats facing the Turkish state."

No figures were released after that meeting, but the press said Tuesday 140 officers and junior officers, including two colonels, were thrown out for alleged fundamentalism.

The 21 others were dismissed for having extreme left-wing sympathies or for involvement in the activities of the so-called Yuksekova Gang. The gang, named after an area near the borders with Iran and Iraq, is accused of drug and arms trafficking.

It was the biggest ever mass sacking from the armed forces. Mr. Erbakan, who has been in conflict with the army for months over his alleged support for fundamentalism, was forced to approve the expulsion of 29 officers and junior officers, 13 of them for Islamist sympathies in August 1996, and another 69, including 58 for fundamentalism, in December.

The army, which sees itself as the guardian of Turkish secularism, is highly sensitive to possible infiltration by Islamists and carries out regular purges.

Mr. Erbakan and his Islamist welfare party are opposed to such dismissals, which have no right of appeal, but are powerless to prevent them.

Turkish president may call elections to resolve troubles

LONDON (AFP) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel favours calling a new general election immediately to resolve the country's present political crisis and reduce the threat of an army coup, he said in an interview published Tuesday.

Mr. Demirel told the Financial Times business daily that he would dissolve parliament "now" if he were empowered to do so by the constitution because the way politicians were behaving in the current parliament was "degrading democracy."

The president there was no reason to fear an army take-over despite the shaky state of the ruling coalition and the three-month-old stand-off between the coalition led by Necmettin Erbakan of the Islamist Welfare Party and the army which accuses Mr. Erbakan of violating the secular principles on which the Turkish republic was founded.

Mr. Demirel's remarks come a few days before the monthly session Saturday of the National Security Council (MGK) which includes the president, prime minister, the foreign, interior and defence ministers and the five armed forces chiefs.

In February, the MGK laid down a series of tough measures to stop the spread of Islamism in Turkey.

"If they are not able to implement it, they should not have signed, or they should resign," Mr. Demiral said.

He said he was convinced the country's current problems could be resolved democratically. But in a warning to the army, he said the armed forces "have intervened three times in political matters (in 1960, 1971 and 1980) and it did not work. They were not able to solve any problem. On the contrary our difficulties were increased."

Israeli rabbi decrees cigarette manufacturers should be cursed

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The spiritual leader of the religious Shas Party has decreed smokers should receive 40 plagues and cigarette manufacturers a curse from God, the Yediot Aharonot newspaper reported Tuesday.

Rabbi Ovadia Yousef, who has thousands of followers in the Jewish state, declared over the weekend that cigarette sellers are "agents of the angel of death."

"Each year some 500 people die in Israel from road accidents and everyone makes a big deal out of this," Rabbi Yousef said, according to the newspaper.

"But people don't know that some 5,000 people die each year from smoking and this is much worse," he told followers at the Yizdim Synagogue during his weekly sermon Saturday night.

"If there were religious rule here (in Israel), each smoker would receive 40 plagues," Rabbi Yousef added.

According to Jewish tradition, plagues are a form of punishment sent by God. The most widely known plagues were those issued against the ancient Egyptians for not freeing their Jewish slaves.

The 10 plagues against the Egyptians included the death of the first born in each family and the transformation of water into blood.

Rabbi Yousef said the Torah, which Christianity regards as the Old Testament, forbids smoking.

"The Torah says: 'You keep your souls,'" Rabbi Yousef said, adding that cigarette manufacturers live off the deaths of smokers.

"To make a living, you live on the account of the deaths of people," he said addressing the cigarette producers. "You will be cursed. Beware on judgement day."

The Shas Party holds 10 seats in the 120-member Knesset.

Israeli Transportation Minister Yitzhak Levy of the National Religious Party announced Monday that he intends to forbid smoking on airplanes that depart from Israel.

Israel has recently begun requiring public establishments and work places to designate smoking and non-smoking areas, but many Israelis continue to smoke.

Iran's new president calls for protection of civil liberties

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's new moderate President Mohammad Khatami called Tuesday for an Islamic society that protects the rights of the individual, offers opportunities to women and addresses the concerns of youth.

"All our citizens' freedoms must be observed," Mr. Khatami said at his first press conference since his stunning landslide victory over the standard-bearer of the conservative ruling clergy in Friday's presidential election.

"We are hoping to form and have a more legal system," said the 54-year-old former culture minister, adding that the people's "right to expression, political participation ... are guaranteed in the Islamic constitution."

But Mr. Khatami used the first part of his hour-long press conference at the presidential palace to stress the values of the 1979 Islamic revolution that toppled the U.S.-backed Shah.

"The vote has been cast as a vote of confidence for the leadership and system ... and the independence of the country," said Mr. Khatami, who ran on a platform of greater democracy, personal freedom and rule of law.

The president-elect stressed a greater role for women in Iranian society and said efforts would be made to involve the country's huge youth population in more aspects of governing.

"There is a duty of government to provide equal opportunities to women," said Mr. Khatami, who is to take office in August. "Possibilities should be provided to women."

"We have to pursue the participation of the youth in all areas of society, including political," he added. "The problems of the youth should be taken immediately into consideration."

During the election campaign Iranians voiced a strong desire for change, listing the stagnating economy and more social freedom as priority issues, and Mr. Khatami won strong backing from young people and women. More than half of Iran's 64-million population was born after 1979.

Khartoum acknowledges loss of state capital in south

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese authorities acknowledged for the first time Tuesday that Rumbek, capital of the southern state of Buhayrat, had been captured by rebels.

The new government daily, Al Anbaa, said Tuesday in its first number that John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) had entered the city in April thanks to what it described as the complicity of top government officials.

It said the rebels had previously attacked the city a number of times without success and suffered "heavy casualties" but the SPLA was then supplied with information by a federal minister "revealing the weak points in the defences of the town" which enabled them to capture it.

It said that a number of ministers and other officials had been arrested by the rebels with assistance from the unidentified minister and an un-named government commissioner.

It gave no details on the fate of the ministers.

The SPLA and northern opponents of the Islamist regime in Khartoum launched an offensive to dislodge it at the beginning of the year.



UNRWA BANKRUPT: Peter Hansen, head of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), gestures during a press conference in Geneva, on Monday. Mr. Hansen said the main United Nations agency's aiding 3.3 million Palestinians is "technically bankrupt" at a time when social and economic stability are vital to Middle East peace prospects. Hansen called urgently for $25 million to meet the agency's $312 million budget this year (Photo by Reuters)

Taiwan activists burn Japan's 'Rising Sun' flags in island dispute

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan hurled invective — and a few eggs — at Japan Tuesday for thwarting a Chinese nationalist flotilla's attempt to reach a disputed archipelago in the East China Sea.

Activists hurled eggs and burned Japanese flags outside Tokyo's Taipei mission to vent frustration after Japanese Sea patrols scuttled their bid to reach the islers — held by Japan as the Senkakus but claimed by Taiwan and China as the Diaoyus.

The Foreign Ministry issued a strong protest to Tokyo's unofficial office in Taipei, calling Taiwan "very dissatisfied with Japan's violation of our country's sovereignty."

A score of protesters, many of whom joined a 20-ship Flotilla that was turned back by Japanese patrols near the islands Monday, scuffled with police outside Japan's mission. "Japanese ghosts, get out" they shouted.

The protesters tried but failed to break a police cordon, then laid out Japanese flags on the ground, plastered them with eggs and set them aflame.

The office is Tokyo's unofficial outpost in Taiwan in the absence of formal diplomatic ties. Tokyo recognises only the communist Chinese government in Beijing.

A similar backlash protest had occurred outside Japan's consulate in Hong Kong Monday shortly after Flotilla leaders gave up on reaching the islands.

In a show of force that contrasted with a meek response to similar 1996 protests, Tokyo Monday deployed 60 coast guard vessels — some armed — and used their superior numbers to keep the protesting flotilla from Taiwan and Hong Kong at bay.

The 20 private protest boats flying U.S. flags and that of Taiwan's exiled republic of China never managed to pass within 12 nautical miles of unpopulated outcrops, lying 200 kilometres northeast of Taiwan and southwest of Japan's Okinawa.

Organisers ended the protest after several minor collisions, one of which sent several journalists briefly overboard.

Japan restated its claim to the uninhabited islets and defended the emphatic rebuff it dealt to the demonstrators.

Despite its later protest, Taipei urged its own activists not to provoke conflicts and said ignoring regional realities could "spark a direct conflict among various powers."

Rival claims to the islands have stirred nationalist passions in Chinese communities in Hong Kong, Taiwan and North America since a Japanese right-wing group built a makeshift lighthouse there in July 1996.

Japan took the chain as war booty after defeating imperial China in 1895. Despite deep differences, China and Taiwan agree the islands should have been returned to Chinese control after Japan's World War II defeat.

COLUMN

Man steals beer truck, ends up in drink

MIAMI (R) — A man who stole a beer truck in Miami had to be rescued by police divers after ploughing into a lake. The watery end to his escapade came after a chase through the city streets with beer cases spilling from the truck as a police helicopter tracked it overhead. The truck smashed through a fence, struck a tree and ended up partially submerged in a lake, police said. The suspected thief disappeared but was later found by police divers hiding in an air pocket beneath the truck. He was taken to a hospital in critical condition. His identity has not yet been established.

Manatee meat sold as 'pork' in Colombia

BOGOTA (R) — At least four manatees have been caught and killed by fishermen off Colombia's Caribbean coast over the past month, Bogota's El Tiempo newspaper said. It said the killings occurred near Cartagena, the country's prime tourist resort, and added that the flesh of the gregarious sea mammals was being sold on local markets as "pork" to avoid drawing the wrath of local environmentalists. Many Colombian cookbooks continue to include recipes for manatee, even though it is one of the world's most endangered species. One such cookbook, Gran Libro de la Cocina Colombiana, says the fleshy, flippered "sea cows" boast four types of meat — alternately similar to pork, beef, fish and tortoise — and recommends that all of them be deep fried.

Mother Teresa calls for end to 'nun bun' profits

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Mother Teresa has personally written to ask a Tennesse coffee shop to stop profiting from the "miracle bun" that some say bears her likeness. In a letter from Calcutta, India, Mother Teresa, 86, asked Bongo Java to stop merchandising its nun bun. "My legal counsel... has written asking you to stop, and now I am personally asking you to stop," she wrote. The Nashville, Tennesse coffee house shellacked the bun and enshrined it in a counter display after a customer discerned a likeness of the nun in the folds of the pastry. The shop later began selling T-shirts, mugs, prayer cards and other items emblazoned with an image of the nun bun. Coffee-house owner Bob Bernstein said he was reconsidering his position. "If it were sacrilege, we'd stop. But it's not," he said, adding that he was seeking to speak with the legal counsel for the renowned charity worker before deciding. "You know, if it really is her image on the bun, then it really is a miracle."

Montreal is like a 'flea market'

MONTREAL (AP) — A local official wants to clear Montreal's streets of people trying to clean out their garages, except for two weeks a year. City councillor Robert Cote, a member of the governing Vision Montreal Party, says the alarming proliferation of garage, yard and sidewalk sales in recent years has become "a major source of visual pollution." Sales notices clutter posts and trees in neighbourhoods while the junk being sold encumbers sidewalks and alleyways, Cote says. "More and more people are calling me to complain they feel like they're living in a flea market because of all the garage sales around their house," Cote said.